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A 45-block area of the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, New York was chosen to illustrate how a poor urban community with the physical potential for restoration might be transformed by a local, unconventional college. About 500,000 poor people live in the area, 95% of whom are Negro or Puerto Rican, and almost 50% of these have only a ninth grade education. This new kind of college would educate people, provide park and recreation space, cultural facilities, and low-rise, low-cost housing. It would function in new buildings, architecturally designed to mix with existing structures and filling in vacant lots or replacing deteriorating buildings. The college would be community-operated, open 12 months a year, 6 days a week, days and nights, for all community dwellers who either have high school diplomas or can pass a set of special tests built around the college's curriculum. The college experience would provide (1) a skills studio for practice and instruction in verbal and mathematical skills, (2) an internship program that combines study and work in particular fields, (3) a liberal studies core that relates economics, psychology, science, and other traditional subjects to basic social and human problems as they are seen by the college's students and faculty, and (4) a professional studies core, for concentration on skills in a chosen profession. The report also contains a blueprint that illustrates the design of the proposed facility. (WM)

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A College in the City: An Alternative

A report from Educational Facilities Laboratories

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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A College in the City: An Alternative

A report from
Educational Facilities
Laboratories

A College in the City:
An Alternative

This report was prepared by the Education Affiliate of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, of which Dr. William M. Birenbaum was president.

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Shortly after I took over as president of the Education Affiliate in Bedford-Stuyvesant, I received a visit from the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy, who had played a major role in the creation of both the Affiliate and the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation. I happened to have my jacket off, my tie loosened, and my feet up on the desk.

"What are you doing?" the Senator asked.

"I'm thinking," I replied.

"Fine," said the Senator, "but what are you going to do when you put your feet down?"

This report is one answer to that question.

William M. Birenbaum

This report is dedicated to the memory of Robert F. Kennedy

With this report, Educational Facilities Laboratories presents a promising new way of looking at the university in the city and, at the same time, makes a plea for leadership by the university. The importance of the report lies in both of these aspects, and, while the report is based on a particular piece of ghetto land in a particular city (my own), its implications clearly are national in scope.

The report suggests that the fact that urban universities have walls and that those on the other side are considered "outsiders" are major contributing factors in the creation of our present plight. The report suggests that urban universities don't have to be that way. A good deal of what is developed here is aimed simply at the creation of a university in which there are no walls and no outsiders. Some scholars would say that this is a contradiction in terms, but perhaps the debate should be reopened. This report will serve that purpose. I hope so.

Albert H. Bowker
Chancellor
The City University of
New York

The colleges and the cities of this country are in trouble.

The colleges and universities are faced with restless, dissatisfied, angry, and occasionally violent students who feel that the higher education which they are receiving is often irrelevant to their needs and to the needs of the world they see around them.

Our American cities are beset with problems so vast and cruel that survival is a real question. Among the most immediate and destructive of the city's problems is the problem of the angry and restless poor community, especially if the poor community is also a black ghetto, a place where the people feel powerless and excluded.

These two kinds of trouble—dissatisfaction and dissent on the campus and anger and despair in the poor communities—are most apparent when they appear together, when the urban college or university finds itself faced with revolt from within its own academic community and at the same time faced with the hostility of the community outside its walls.

In poverty-stricken areas, the people are frequently community-bound. Although knowledgeable within their environs, they can be timid about venturing into unfamiliar areas or doing unfamiliar things. Being forced to go out of their community to seek what they need causes resentment. In addition, when students must move out of the home environment to seek further education, conflict is set up between home and university which is not necessary but can be extremely troublesome, working to the detriment of everyone concerned.

The poor communities, whatever their racial composition, are in desperate need of exactly what the colleges are in business to provide—the liberal and liberating experience of expanded learning; the various kinds of social and cultural experience and expertise that come with higher education; the specific skills and professional knowledge that can enable a young man or woman to overcome the effects of poverty and in turn help his community to combat them. The poor communities must have doctors, teachers, lawyers, skilled businessmen, capable public officials, and social scientists who have emerged from the community and know its problems firsthand. It is this direct link between knowledge and action, between the study of a problem and its practical solution, that both college and community desperately need.

The colleges are rapidly becoming aware of the physical and intellectual gaps that exist between themselves, the students they are attempting to educate, and the aroused and indignant communities that surround them. It is often the very existence of the poor communities that leads students to charge their institutions with failure in dealing effectively with the major social problems of the day.

This whole set of urban problems becomes most painfully clear in the planning and construction of new colleges in cities. New higher education facilities are needed by everyone, rich and poor, black or white. And because the demand is so high,

there is a natural urge to adopt deceptively expedient methods to get new facilities constructed.

This usually turns out to be the most conventional process. Once the decision to build a four-year or a two-year "community" college has been made, the most expedient procedure is to duplicate existing urban campuses and in the process to duplicate all of the old problems. A site is chosen for reasons of availability, accessibility, and low cost of acquisition. Once the site is acquired, anywhere from 5 to 10 city blocks may be demolished, and in their stead may rise a gleaming new "superblock" campus. No matter how well designed the superblock may be, no matter how pleasing the visual result, it still constitutes a visual and physical barrier between itself and the old community. There is no honest interaction between the college and the surrounding community which provided the land and hoped for higher education for its children. The people from the community—and the students attending the college—have no voice in the operation of the institution which sits there serving its conventional purpose, an alien intruder in the local scene.

It might be possible to produce both a better institution of higher education and an institution that would be a force in the regeneration and revival of the local community. This could happen not only through the education of young people, but also through a new approach to the planning and operation of college facilities. The college's facilities might thus become an integral part of, and contribution to, the renewal of the community.

These problems must be approached simultaneously if the resulting institution is to have the large regenerative impact that the poor communities need.

This report is an attempt to describe just such a planning effort as it has been taking place in one specific poor community, the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, New York. The report sets forth both an educational concept of what a college in Bedford-Stuyvesant should be and a physical interpretation of that concept. The two cannot be separated.

The college described here does not as yet exist in Bedford-Stuyvesant. Indeed, it may not be created there in the exact form envisioned in the planning process described here. The planning process itself and the plans that have emerged from it, however, may well be applicable not just to Bedford-Stuyvesant but to any new college being planned for any urban community in America.

The Urban Setting

Bedford-Stuyvesant is a large section of the borough of Brooklyn in New York City. It is typical of the many poor and largely black communities in the cities of this country, not only in its composition but in its potential for restoration.

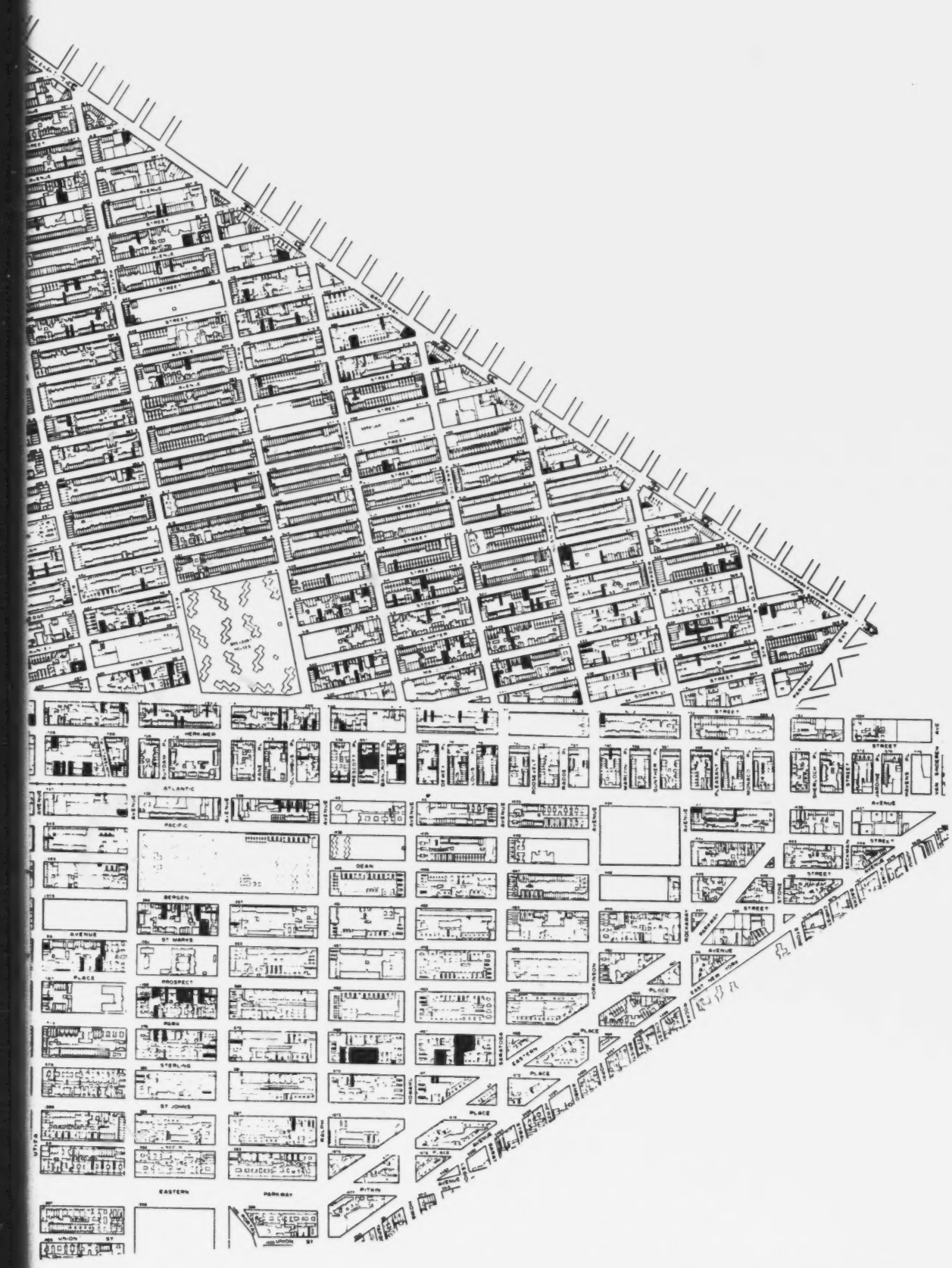
It is a community of about 500,000 people, 95 percent of them Negro or Puerto Rican. These half a million people are crowded into an area of approximately 5.2 square miles, and al-

Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation

Bedford-Stuyvesant D and S Corporation

Abandoned buildings and vacant lots are not limited to one area, but are spread irregularly throughout the site. There is no single, large area of deterioration which could contain a college campus.

Abandoned building or vacant lot



most half of them fall into the economic category of being "poverty stricken," earning less than $4,000 per year.

Much of Bedford-Stuyvesant is deteriorated. There are burned-out houses left in ruins. There are empty lots scattered throughout the area—many of them filled with junk or broken-down automobiles.

The people of Bedford-Stuyvesant are not provided with adequate educational opportunities. The public school system has not provided the kinds and amounts of education needed by the people. About half of the people in this community have never gone beyond the ninth grade. As of 1964, almost 30 percent of the high-school-age population was not even in school, and 30 percent of those who had dropped out were unemployed. Of the 252 Bedford-Stuyvesant students who graduated from academic high schools in 1964, only 5 had grade averages of 85 or better and could thus qualify for admission to the free four-year colleges of the New York City university system.

In most respects, Bedford-Stuyvesant is restorable, in no way a candidate for the wholesale destruction of the conventional urban-renewal program. It is not rigidly cut off from surrounding Brooklyn or the rest of New York City. It is almost impossible to tell where Bedford-Stuyvesant begins or ends. It is supplied with excellent public transportation, so that the people can work in other parts of the city (if work is available) or enjoy the rich variety of cultural activities that New York City provides.

Bedford-Stuyvesant, like most poor urban communities, is a lively place with a rich urban life and plenty of action. The main thoroughfares are crowded with shops, storefront churches, small manufacturing firms, bars, eating places, smoke shops, and busy people.

The side streets off the main thoroughfares are largely residential. Some of the houses are run-down, others are in good repair, and some have been handsomely restored. There are many movements to form block associations in Bedford-Stuyvesant for the purpose of cleaning up and fixing up particular neighborhoods.

In a purely physical sense, this section of Brooklyn not too long ago was one of the most handsome residential sections of

New York City. Along with its transportation system, Bedford-Stuyvesant's architecture is its most impressive physical asset. In the 1870's what is now Bedford-Stuyvesant was largely farm land. As the population of the city grew, it spread into this section of Brooklyn in several waves. Beginning with the section nearest Brooklyn Heights and Borough Hall, the first wave of housing consisted mainly of two-and three-story brick facade homes. The second wave further out was mostly the famed brownstone row houses. Then came the limestone town houses and the canopied highrises of the 1920's and '30's.

Many of the residential streets are considerably wider than most city streets, and many were and still are lined with trees.

There are often small stores on the ground-floor level of the houses. Backyard areas between the blocks are ample. The wide streets, along with the empty lots, are basically the open spaces of Bedford-Stuyvesant. It is here that the children play, people sit on stoops, and the life of the area takes place.

In short, Bedford-Stuyvesant is a poor urban community that has great physical potential for restoration. In fact, Bedford-Stuyvesant has been compared to the more attractive sections of Paris. It might well be re-created at that level of urban style, if the necessary energy and resources can be mustered.

This does not mean that the needs of Bedford-Stuyvesant, or any other similar urban community can be met by a fresh coat of paint. There are insufficient park and recreation spaces and few cultural facilities. There are not enough small businesses or light industries to provide sufficient jobs for the people. Many assets are not currently used to the best advantage. Backyards are one example of this, but the

streets themselves are perhaps the most obvious. Only the front stoop has developed a place for people to congregate and gossip. In Bedford-Stuyvesant the streets are broad and attractive enough to permit wider usage.

It is clear that the restoration of Bedford-Stuyvesant is not only desirable but possible. It is also clear that this kind of restoration is not going to happen without considerable amounts of money, without organization and involvement on the part of the people themselves, or without great assistance from society at large. Fortunately, self-organization, involvement, and outside assistance are already well under way.

The local movement is centered in the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, a community-based and almost completely community-staffed organization made up of the major groups in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area. This organization has emerged with the assistance of a group of outside businessmen and civic leaders organized under the leadership of the late Sena-

tor Robert F. Kennedy. The main power and responsibility lie with the Restoration Corporation; it is this group that is attempting to pull the various elements of the community together, to obtain federal money, and to do the planning necessary for the revival of the area.

One of the most obvious problems that the people of Bedford-Stuyvesant have been facing over the past years is the whole question of education. Something has to be done about the education of its people.

This concern led to the creation of an Education Affiliate to the Restoration Corporation, headed by Dr. William Birenbaum, former vice president and provost of Long Island University. The architectural firm of Toombs, Amisano & Wells was engaged to assist in physical planning. Working with a wide variety of community people both in and out of the Restoration Corporation, the Education Affiliate began the process of thinking out what a new kind of locally based college for a poor community might be. The results of this process are still deliberately incomplete, since many of the details of organization and operation will, and should, be worked out by the community people as the college is formed. The general principles might well be applicable to the design of higher education and college facilities in any similar situation.

Perhaps the first and most important result of this kind of planning process is the recognition that a college for a community such as Bedford-Stuyvesant has to be an institution that adds a great deal to the community and subtracts nothing. Thus the college has to answer a great many unusual educational, social, and physical needs, but at the same time it must not destroy homes, misuse valuable space, or become merely an academic ghetto in the middle of an urban ghetto.

Far beyond that, the urban college and its physical expression can be one of the most powerful and important forces in the human and physical revival of its community, both in terms of providing educated community people and in terms of rebuilding and redesigning the physical environment. This would have to be done by starting with the customs of the community and building upon them. There would be no point in creating a college that would be alien to the physical and social environment in which the people live. But there would be significance in creating a college that would build upon the realities of a community such as Bedford-Stuyvesant and would begin to provide many of the things that the community lacks. Bedford-Stuyvesant, for instance, needs park and recreation space, cultural facilities such as theater, music, art, films, and new housing that is not high rise and high income.

Since these are needs of the community and since the college would be there to help fill community needs, all of these things must be taken into account by the community and its planners.

Another of the obvious, basic needs for an urban community such as Bedford-Stuyvesant is a clear sense of local responsibility and control. The people in these communities understand what can happen when a conventional institution of higher education is located in a poor community, especially a predominantly black one. All too easily and quickly such a college could become separate, largely white, and unsympathetic to the needs and desires of the local people. If this is not to happen, then the community must have a say about the aims and policies of the college, both the academic aims and procedures and the physical planning processes—where the college is to be located, who gets in and how, what is destroyed or not destroyed to make room for the college, what is taught there and whether or not it relates to the restoration of the community. This is not possible unless a large portion of the people responsible for setting policy are from the local community.

Another assumption that flows from the idea of tying the college and the local community together is that in such a college there should be no separation between knowledge and action. Both the restless students in the urban colleges and the angry local communities have sensed that in the conventional college there often tends to be a great deal of studying about matters of great importance but not always a sense of urgency about doing something about them and using the knowledge effectively.

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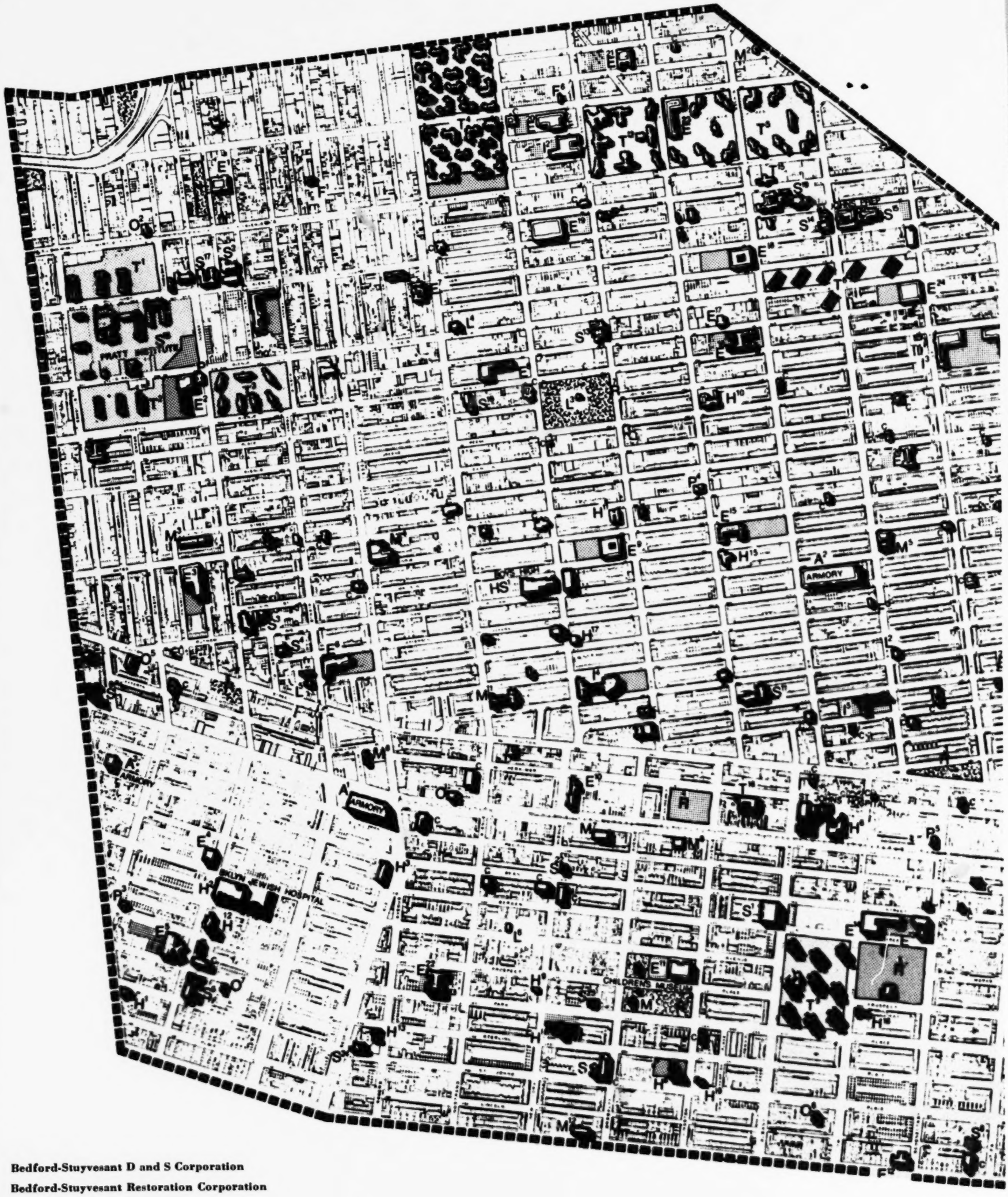
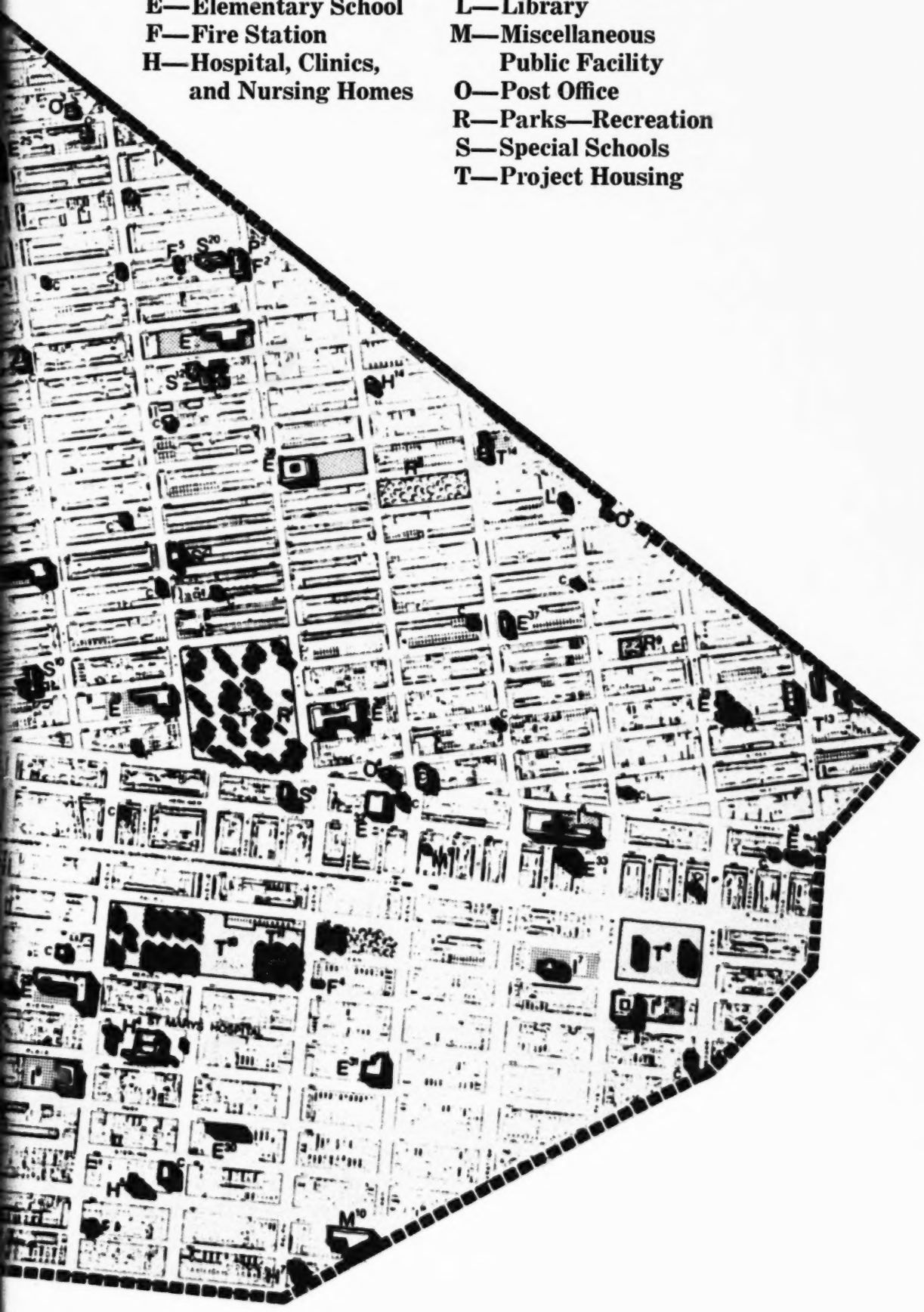


Bedford-Stuyvesant D and S Corporation

Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation

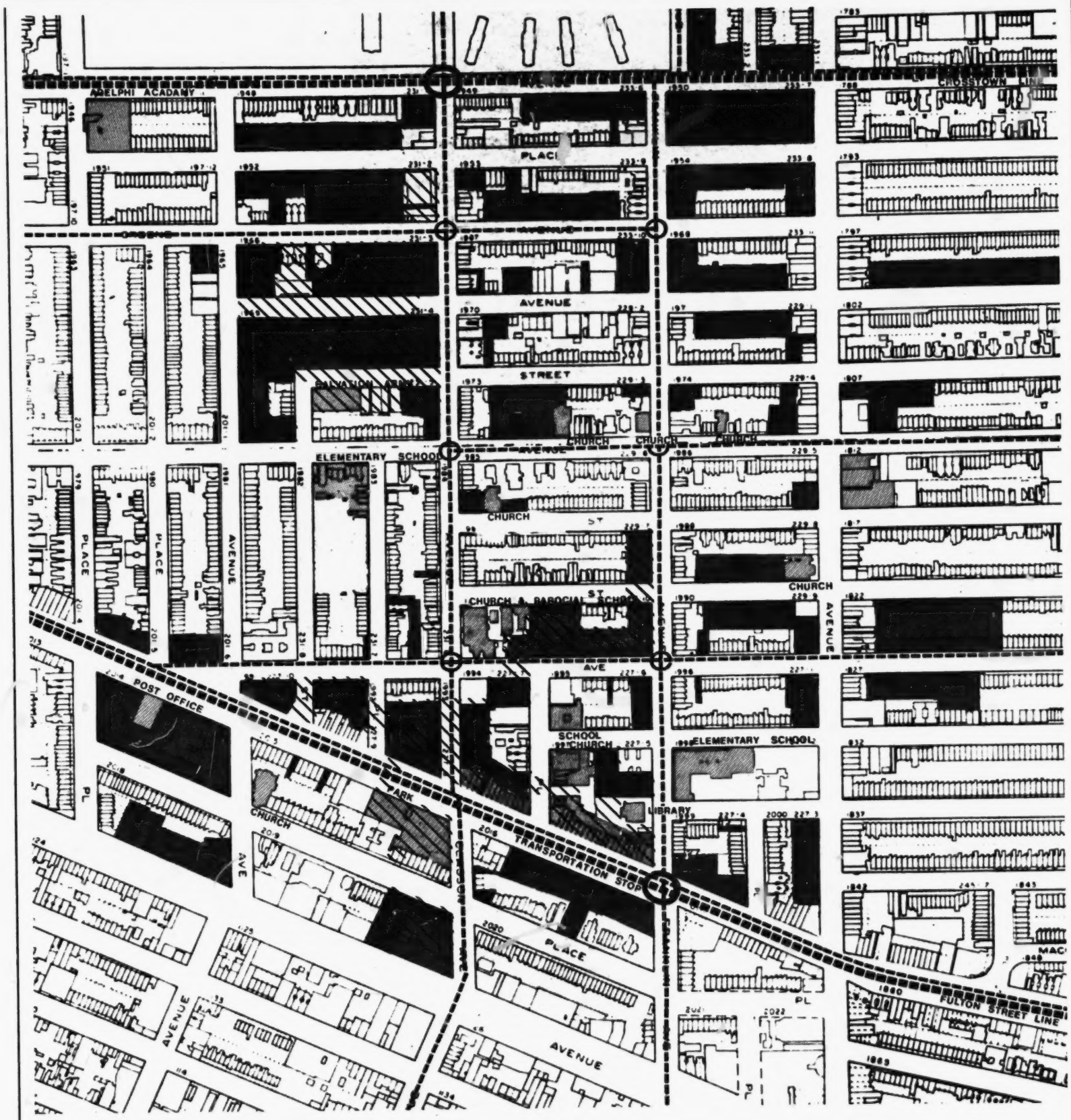
Community facilities are scattered throughout the site. To have maximum contact with these facilities and not disrupt the community activities, the college should be threaded through the community as necessity and the availability of space dictate.

A—Armory
C—Churches
E—Elementary School
F—Fire Station
H—Hospital, Clinics, and Nursing Homes
HS—High School
I—Intermediate School
L—Library
M—Miscellaneous Public Facility
O—Post Office
R—Parks—Recreation
S—Special Schools
T—Project Housing



Most colleges are not organized in a way that makes action possible. If a college in an urban poor community could be organized in such a way as to make action possible, if what is studied and how it is studied is to have some direct, effective, and meaningful relationship to what goes on in the community, then the college itself must have a set of aims and a structure quite different from the conventional college. The curriculum, while retaining some relationship to the kinds of subjects studied in conventional colleges, would have to be built around the wants and needs of people in the community.

A further assumption is that the people in a community such as Bedford-Stuyvesant must have access to this college. This might begin with the young people themselves—not just the few who have academic diplomas and high grade averages, but those having only certificates of graduation and especially those who have dropped out of school, those who have learned or been taught to feel that the conventional ways of schooling have little to offer them. Further, there are adults in the community, potentially talented people, who, because of poverty and related causes, never had a chance to receive an education in their youth. These people need the skills and training that higher education offers, just as the community needs these people trained and educated so that they can become more effective in the restoration of the community. This principle of accessibility applies not only to the admissions policies of the college but to the physical planning of the college; if the college is to be a part of the community and serve it, then community people must



DETERIORATION MAP: This composite map of deterioration, vacant lots, community facilities, and transportation was composed from several planning maps developed by The Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation and from New York City zoning and transportation maps. It shows the relationships of restorable and non-restorable buildings to community facilities and transportation. This particular site was chosen because it had the desired mix, though other areas would be suitable.

have access to all college facilities, and conversely the college must have access to the community. Ideally, it should be difficult to distinguish between the college and the community.

This implies another principle —the idea of the urban mix. This is what a city is, a mixture within a limited amount of space of a wide cross section of life. There are businesses, housing, play space, schools, transportation, churches, manufacturing firms both large and small, restaurants, entertainment places—all operating together to form a complex way of life. People should be able to move easily from one of these activities to another, from home to work to play to church to school and back home. A college, therefore, should be a part of this mix, just as easily available and welcoming as the corner grocery store or the storefront church. And this means something more than simply not building a superblock campus. There should be no arbitrary separation from the other aspects of the local life, no singling out of a structure, which is seen as separate and forbidding, because it is obviously stamped by its architecture as "college."

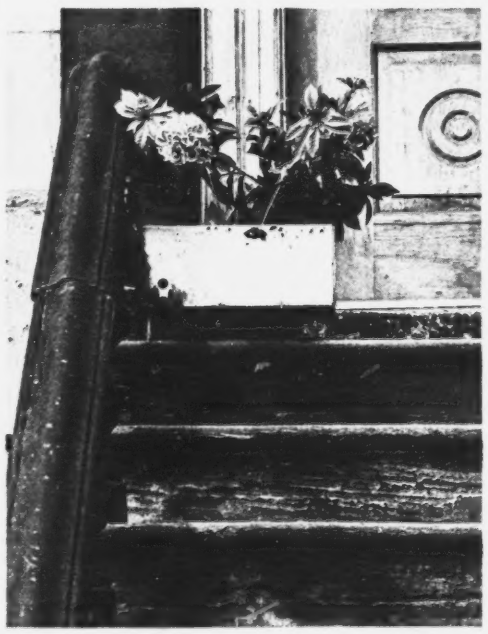
This leads directly to another necessary principle—that of mixed occupancy. Most of the buildings along the main thoroughfares of residential streets of a community such as Bedford-Stuyvesant have stores on the first floor with several floors of walk-up apartments above. Often a building will have multiple uses. These may be a small store, some office space, and housing units all inhabiting the same structure. In such a community, there is little separation between the various aspects of living, even within the same building. Everything co-exists quite naturally and normally, and many different kinds of activities are readily accessible. Indeed, it is often quite difficult not to learn about what is going on in all of these different areas.

The ideas of urban mix and joint occupancy offer a further possibility, and a most important one. If a college is to add to the community and not subtract, and if it can be threaded through the community and mix with other kinds of buildings, then it is necessary for the planning of facilities to make use of a large range of options at any given moment. In communities

such as Bedford-Stuyvesant, burned-out buildings, empty lots, and badly deteriorated housing are scattered between and around homes in good condition, commercial buildings, schools, churches, and stores. Thus the community is dotted with many small parcels of available space. In their present state, these spaces are eyesores that are useless to the community. Since large tracts of open land are not available,these odd lots make natural places for the college to begin where new construction seems desirable. Beyond that, any building put up by the college or taken over for rehabilitation should have a built-in flexibility through mixed occupancy. The uses of most urban buildings change with great frequency. Stores come and go, expand and contract. Housing is altered regularly to make it larger or smaller or to change it into office or store space. New loft-type construction can be designed so that it could be used for many different purposes and changed easily to fit new needs. The college could expand or contract with considerable ease as time and necessity demand. The college could also obtain revenue from the commercial parts of the college buildings.

Perhaps most importantly, since this is a community-operated college, the community will have a controlling voice in what the various uses and mixes would be. There would be no wanton destruction of segments of the community. The local people would have a say in both the initial planning of what goes where and the later decisions about what alterations and subsequent uses make the most sense.

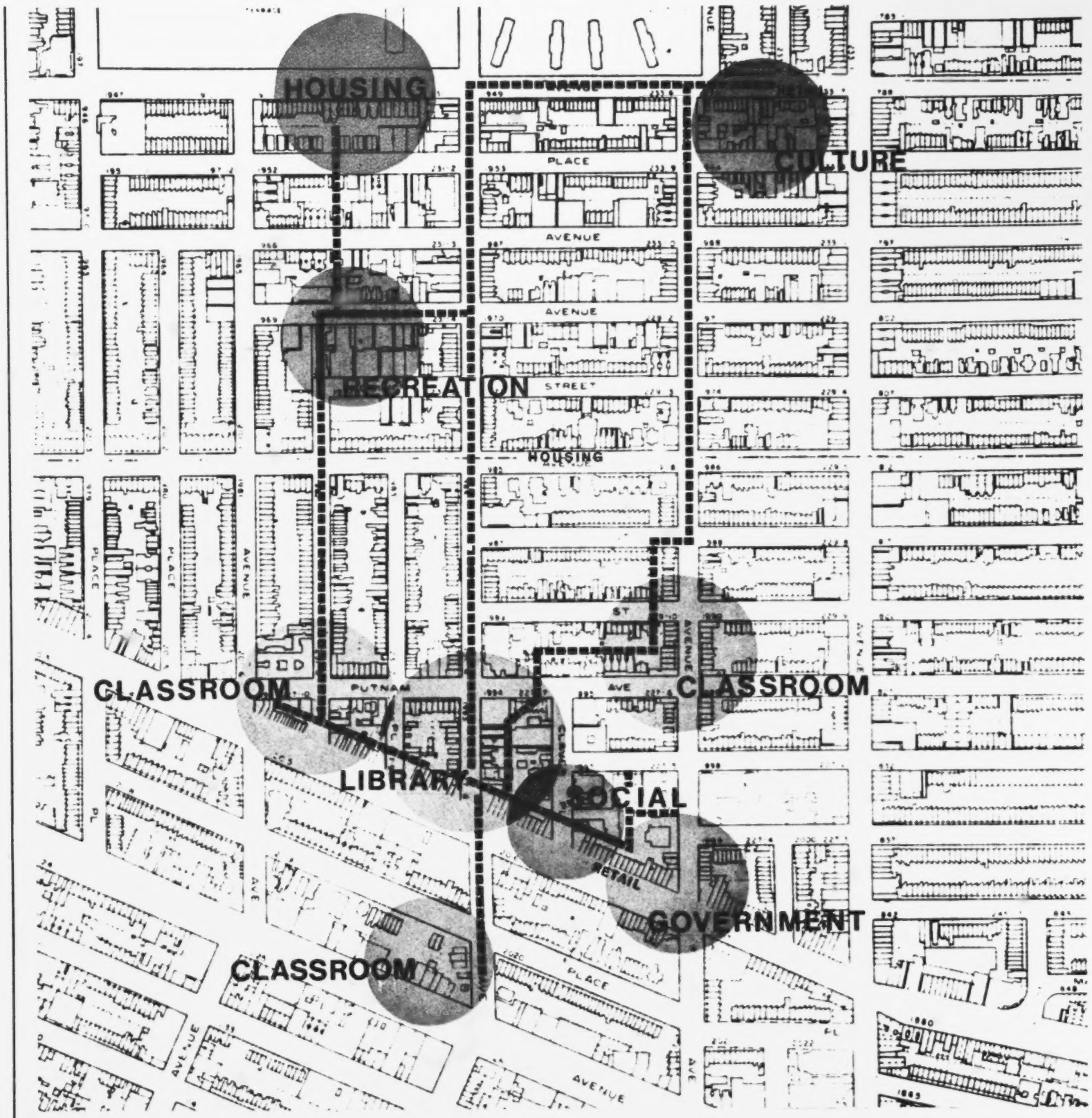
Along with the necessity not to disrupt or destroy the community, there is an equal necessity to maintain the existing scale of buildings and to preserve the life patterns created by existing density. Bedford-Stuyvesant, for instance, is essentially a low-rise area (four to five stories being the maximum) that is quite heavily populated. The basic building element in Bedford-Stuyvesant is the width of the standard house—20 to 25 feet. Most of the buildings use this module or multiples of it. This, therefore, should be the college's basic building module.



The college—as it helps rebuild its community—will complicate the density situation and will increase the need for new functions such as recreation and culture.

Bedford-Stuyvesant is already packed with people. Even without subtracting burned-out houses, empty lots, or commercial buildings, the average density is about 700 people per block. This kind of density does not necessarily mean that such an area is or has to be a slum. More important are the actual living conditions, the environment created by people in the community. Any planning for an area such as Bedford-Stuyvesant will have to work within the existing densities and at the same time attempt to provide the amenities that may be lacking in the area now.

The following planning section attempts to show what a college designed according to these principles might be like. It is a flexible proposal conceived with a specific area in mind but applicable to urban communities throughout America. It is the blueprint for a college in the city —an alternative.



FACILITIES MAP: The facilities for the college are placed according to need and in relation to transportation and present zoning. The *library* is the center of the plan, located near a subway stop on the major retail and commercial street. Spreading around it are the *classrooms* and *laboratories*. The *government* cluster is located at the intersection of two subways (and the existing public library) to provide easy access to the rest of the city. The *recreation* area chosen, central to the college site, was originally a dead end street featuring many buildings beyond repair. The *cultural* center is located on a secondary retail street having a subway line. Small lounges, meeting places, and eating facilities are dispersed throughout the area with a concentration along the major retail street near the library and government. *Housing* will be widely scattered and intermixed with existing construction.

A College in the City

The college must have as one of its main concerns the rebuilding and restoration of Bedford-Stuyvesant itself. The community itself is the campus and the "site" of the college. The college and community are a single planning restoration problem. The millions of dollars that go into the physical plant and the staffing of a new college may well be the largest single investment the community is likely to see at any one time. (This is the case in Bedford-Stuyvesant at the moment.) Not only the local community itself but the larger society that is putting up the money needs to be assured of getting the largest possible return on such a large investment.

The planning of the college, then, must involve all of the community's elements and problems in the planning mix in order to come up with solutions that establish the desired connections.

The first step towards such a college and such a mutual planning process is the establishment of a governing board made up of no more than 25 people (the maximum according to state law) representing the widest possible range of opinion within the community. More than 60 groups in the community have already been involved in the development of the college, including civil rights, welfare, and youth organizations and other civic groups. It would be the job of this governing board, once it is officially in power, to adopt the final operating rules for the college and begin working out the exact details of the planning. This device of a local governing board should go a long way towards making sure that the college does not become an academic ghetto, that there is a solid connection between what is studied in the college and the life and needs of Bedford-Stuyvesant.

In addition, the students themselves will have a major hand in the management of the college. Although the college will have professional administrative personnel, much of the policy-making and operational functions of the college will be handled by students. One part of the academic program, for instance, will be devoted to training students how to run a college, and this will provide some manpower for administrative chores. In addition, each section of the college will have its own council of cooperating students which will have a major voice in determining the policy of that segment of the college. Each of these councils will then send a member to serve on an over-all council for the entire college. Students will also be involved in running many of the college facilities, such as the cafeterias, theaters, recreation and athletic facilities, libraries, and stores.

As the governing board is formed, it will be responsible for the creation of a four-year institution—the equivalent of a four-year liberal arts college, fully chartered and able to grant bachelors degrees in arts and sciences to its graduates, thus enabling them to go on to get advanced degrees in other institutions. Although it will start out small, as well as experimental (around 300 students in the first class), it is designed to grow

until it is large enough to have the desired major impact on the community (an eventual enrollment of 5000-8000, both college age and adult).

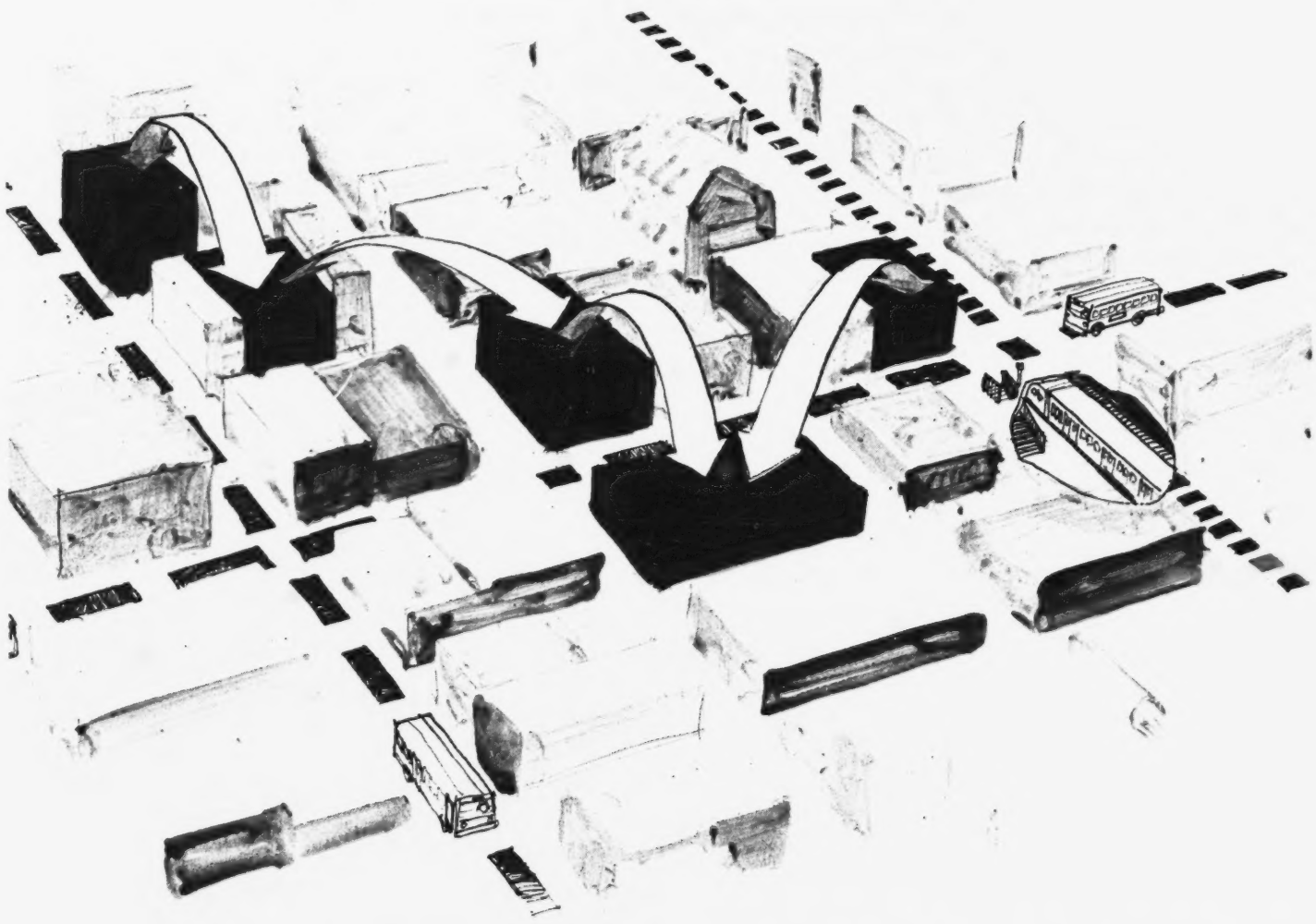
Since this college will exist in Bedford-Stuyvesant, it will—as it should—conform to the local time schedules. It will be available when the people need it, which is a full twelve months of the year and six days a week, daytime and evenings. Whenever the people have the time, the college will be there to be used.

Another obvious and major requirement for this college is that its student body be drawn from all sections of the Bedford-Stuyvesant community, from the five students with academic diplomas and grade average of 85 to the bright and able young person who dropped out at the end of junior high, completely turned off on school in any form, and also including adults who may have dropped out of school years ago. The simple possession of a high school diploma or successful performance on a set of special tests built around the college's curriculum will make a student qualified to apply for admission to this college. Beyond that, there will be a series of intensive personal counseling sessions with all applicants, whether they possess credentials or not, and final admission to the college will be made from the entire body of applicants, in part to insure that the student body is an honest cross section of the Bedford-Stuyvesant community.

Once a student has been admitted to the college, he will find himself involved in a college experience that falls into four basic parts, all interconnected. These are: the skills studio, the internship program, the liberal studies core, and the professional studies core.

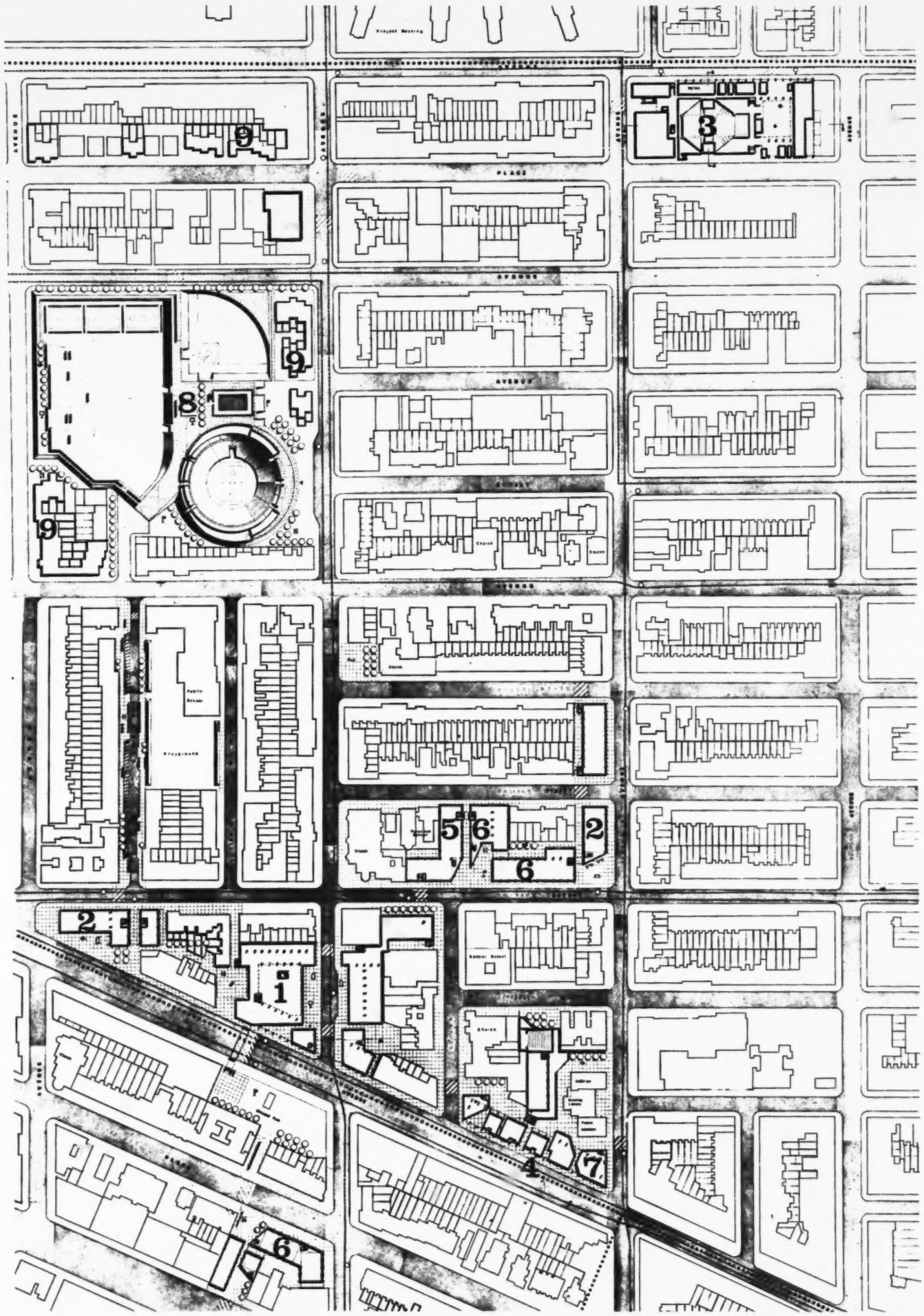
Even though a student is admitted, it will not be presumed that he or she is equipped to handle everything the curriculum contains. Bright students or adults who have dropped out at

THE CONCEPT: This illustration shows how the college grows by filling in vacant spaces in the area rather than by annihilating total blocks.



the end of the ninth grade and even students with high school certificates are probably not completely equipped with sufficient skill in reading and mathematics to handle a complicated college curriculum, no matter how different that curriculum may be. One of the major components of the college's organization, therefore, is a skills studio, a place where students get practice and instruction in verbal and mathematical skills as these are related to the kinds of work involved in the regular curriculum. The studio will be available full time to students during summers before they enter the college and also during their years in college.

During the admissions interview and counseling sessions, the student and his advisors will work out a rough and tentative plan of what the student would like to do with his college experience and to some extent with his life, what areas of study and work interest him most, what career he might like to look forward to. These are not final, irrevocable decisions and can be altered easily if a mistake is made by the student or the college. But, instead of simply taking a series of courses about the field of his choice, the student will actually begin to work in that field, in part to find out if his choice is a sensible one. This is the internship part of the college, designed to be one of the links between the abstract knowledge of a field and the actual workings of that knowledge in the world. Each student's internship will take him out of the college for 16 to 20 hours of the week in paid employment in a law office, a poverty agency, a hospital, a school, a manufacturing concern, or the business headquarters in Manhattan of an IBM or General Motors. This work will help the college atmosphere and put some much-needed money in the pockets of students. Whatever internship the student chooses will be a



Ground level

1—Library
2—Social
3—Culture
4—Government
5—Laboratory
6—Classroom
7—Office–Seminar
8—Recreation
9—Housing

form of studying and learning about the field, with the program especially arranged so that the people in the company or agency are actually a part of the college faculty—teachers as well as employers.

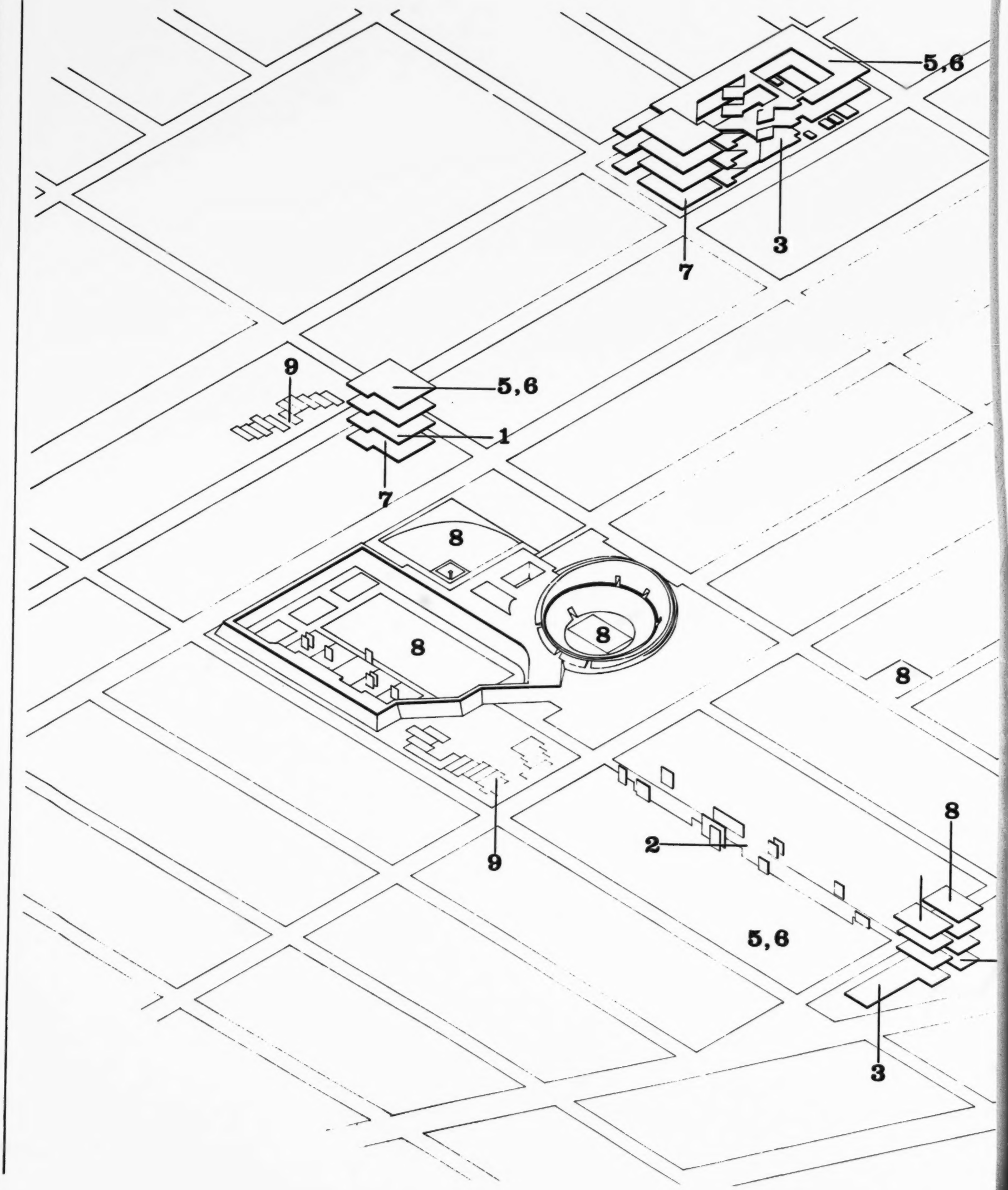
A third part of the college's organization will be the liberal studies core, redesigned to relate the more formal study of conventional subjects—economics, psychology, science, etc.—to the basic social and human problems as these problems are seen by the students and faculty of the college. The problems are meant to grow out of the internship experience and the life of the Bedford-Stuyvesant community, with faculty members in conventional disciplines contributing what is relevant to the particular problem within an interdisciplinary framework. Knowledge, hopefully, will not be divided up into disciplinary compartments or hour-long segments spread throughout the week and year. Problems might well be considered for full days only once a week, with the rest of the time spent on related professional studies, interning, and in related work in the skills studio.

The fourth part of the organization of the college is the professional studies core, that part of the student's life devoted to becoming skilled in a particular profession. Obviously this is closely tied in with the internship program, since the student would intern in his field of professional choice. Then, too, it relates to the skills studio, since the student would be concentrating on those skills needed in his profession. In addition, the student would be studying those problems most relevant to his field of professional interest in the liberal studies core. The areas of professional concentration selected for the early years of the college (selected on the basis of having the most pressing urgency for the Bedford-Stuyvesant community and the best chance of employment for the student) are: administration and management in commerce and industry, in public agencies and government, in educational, cultural, and technically oriented institutions such as schools and hospitals; creative arts in all manifestations; teacher education with emphasis on the preparation of community people to teach in the public schools; and pre-law, with the aim of providing trained lawyers for practice in Bedford-Stuyvesant but also for legal work in a wide variety of fields. Nursing, pharmacy, and medical technology would be fields added to the curriculum as soon as possible.

In addition to the conventional type of faculty and the student's internship faculty on the job, plans are also under way to recruit a tutorial cadre among black college students on various other campuses in the New York area, both at the graduate and undergraduate levels. These successful black college students in other institutions would serve as advisors and models to individual students at this college in the field of the student's choice. The faculty as a whole, then, is an unconventional one—regular academicians, professional people on the job, and tutors making up a teaching talent unit.

As an example of what might be done, an area of Bedford-Stuyvesant has been selected to provide a concrete instance of how one part of this local community might be assisted and perhaps transformed as a result of the presence of this kind of college. The proposed area to be affected by the college extends 11 blocks north and south connecting two major subway lines and weaves east and west for 5 blocks. The site touches some 45 blocks. Approximately 45,000 people will live in the vicinity of the college.

This particular area was selected because it represented a cross section of the community — good transportation, a busy commercial and retail section running along one of the community's main thoroughfares, existing good or restorable housing, some empty or burned-out buildings and empty lots, and existing lower school facilities. This area also has many of the problems likely to be encountered in a poverty area, but an active and interested citizenry makes progress possible.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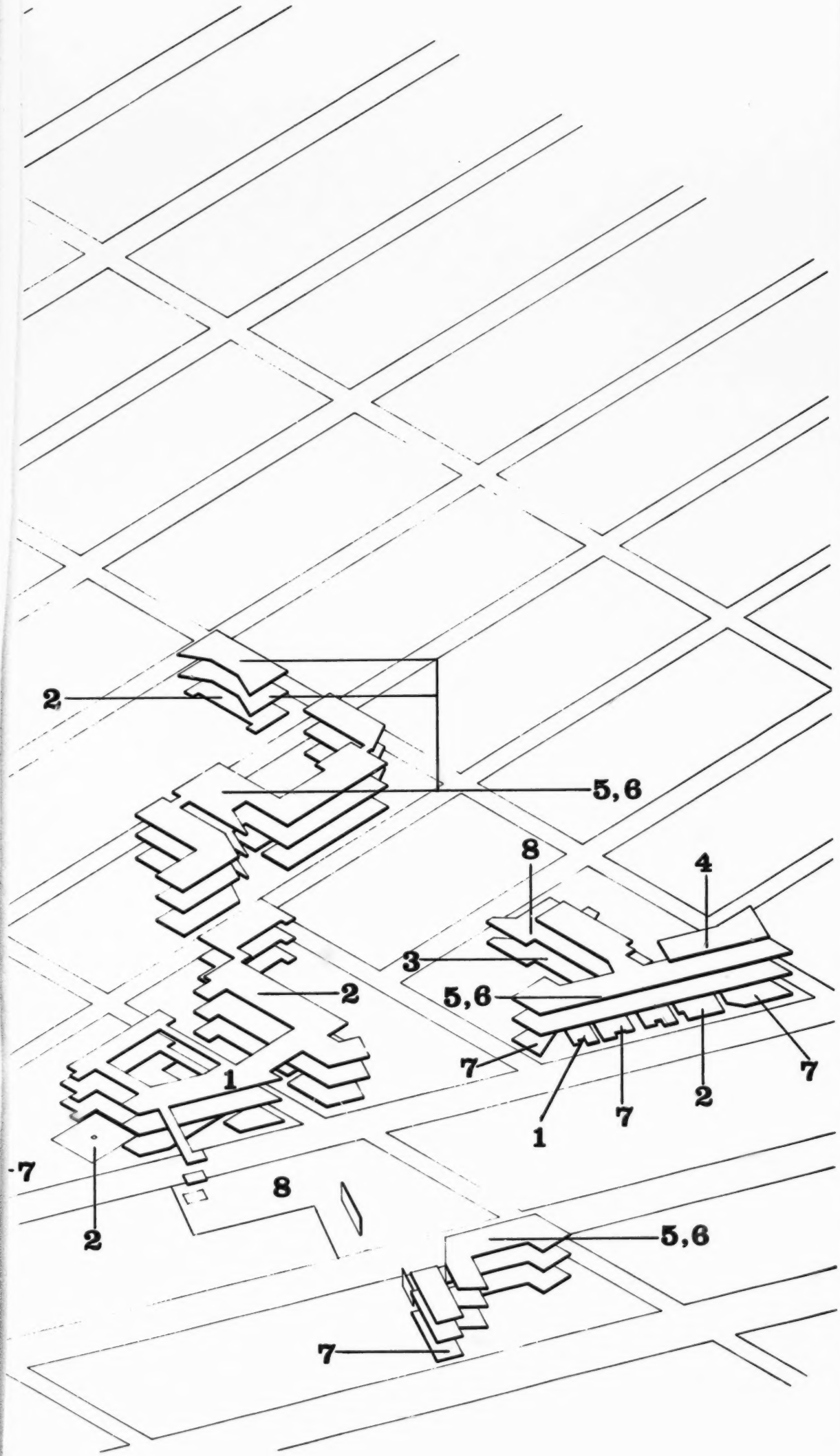
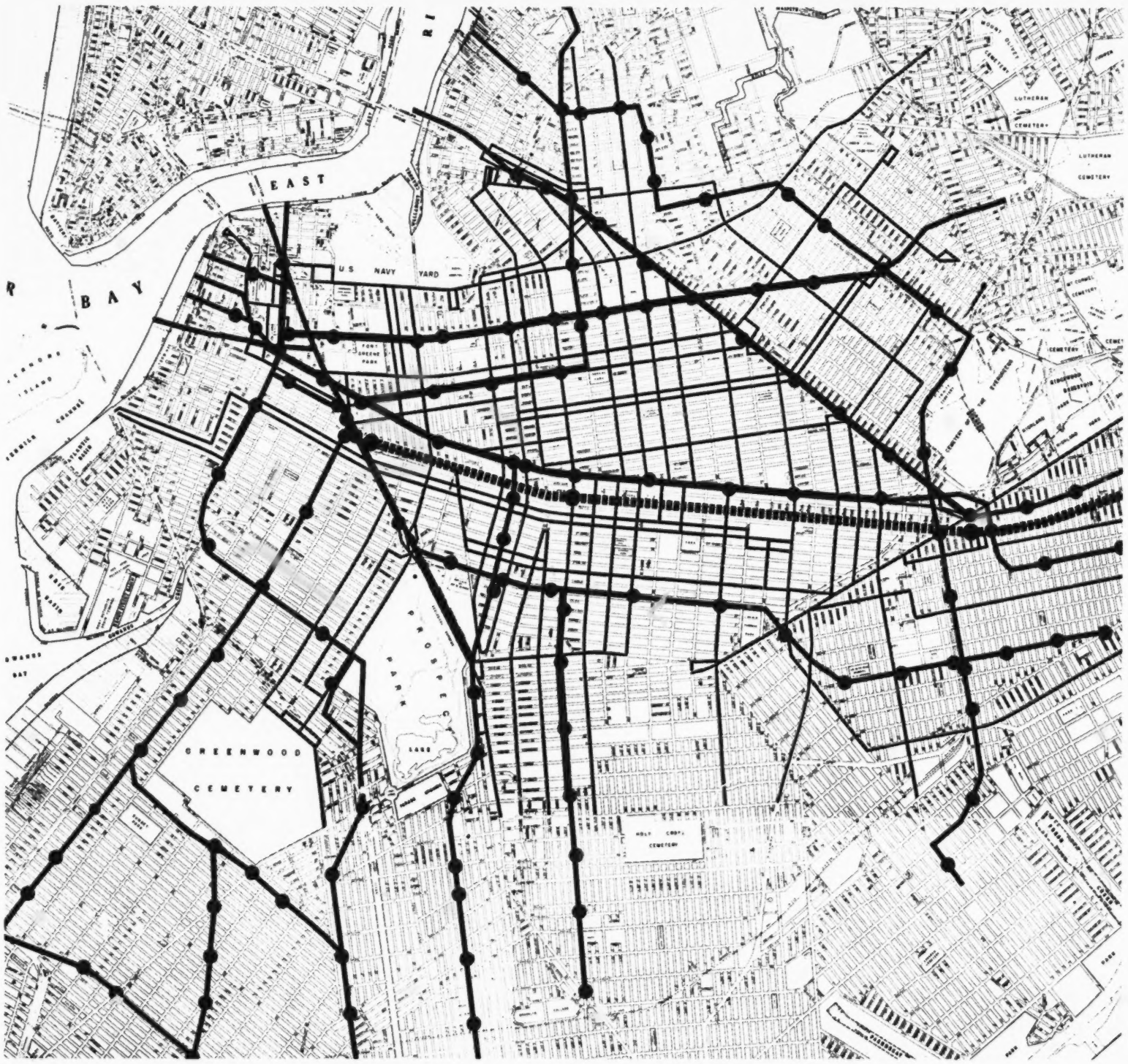


The isometric view of the major sections of the campus shows the interrelationships of the centers of activity and how the facilities spread out within this section of the community.

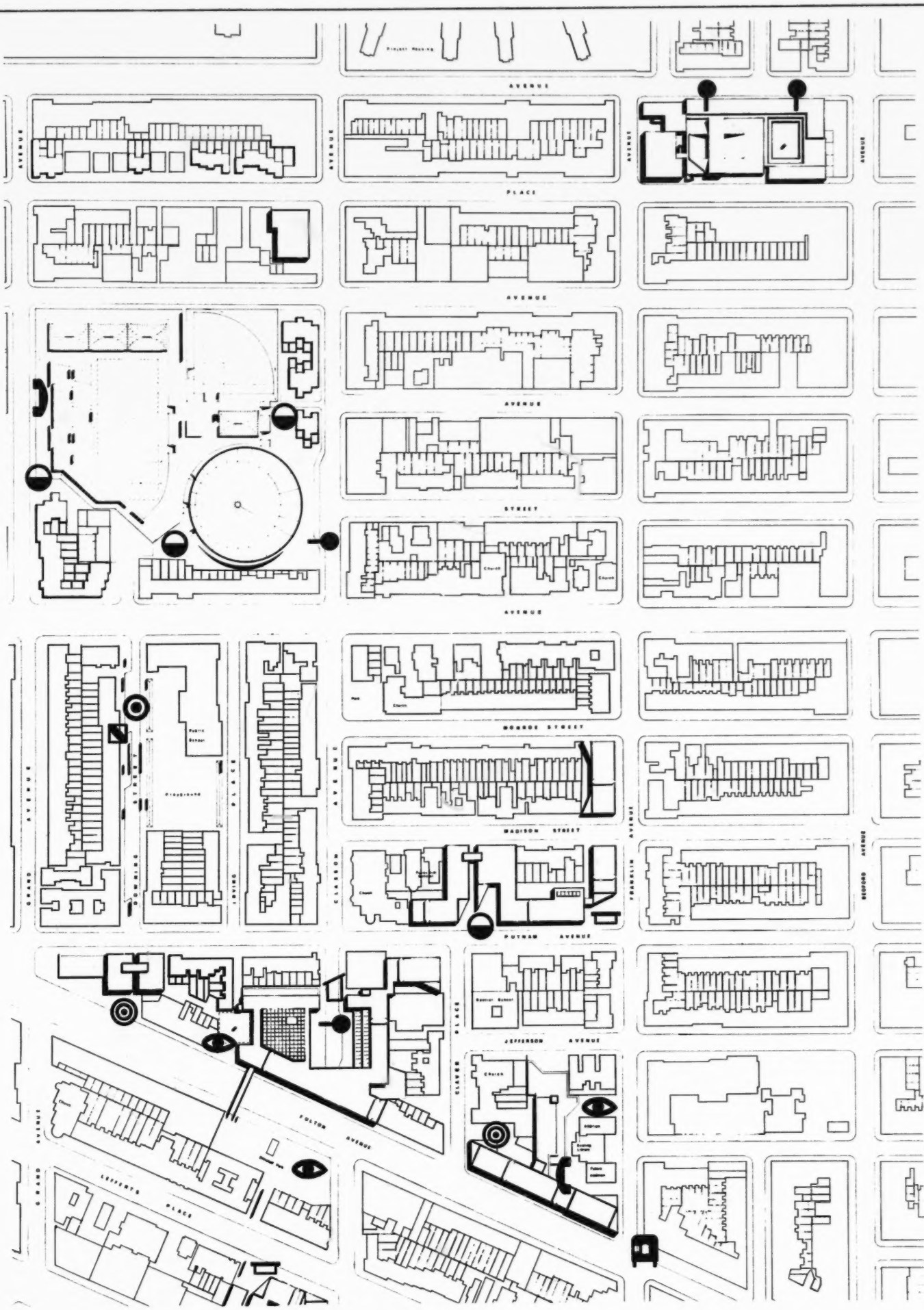
1—Library
2—Social
3—Culture
4—Government
5—Laboratory
6—Classroom
7—Office–Seminar
8—Recreation
9—Housing

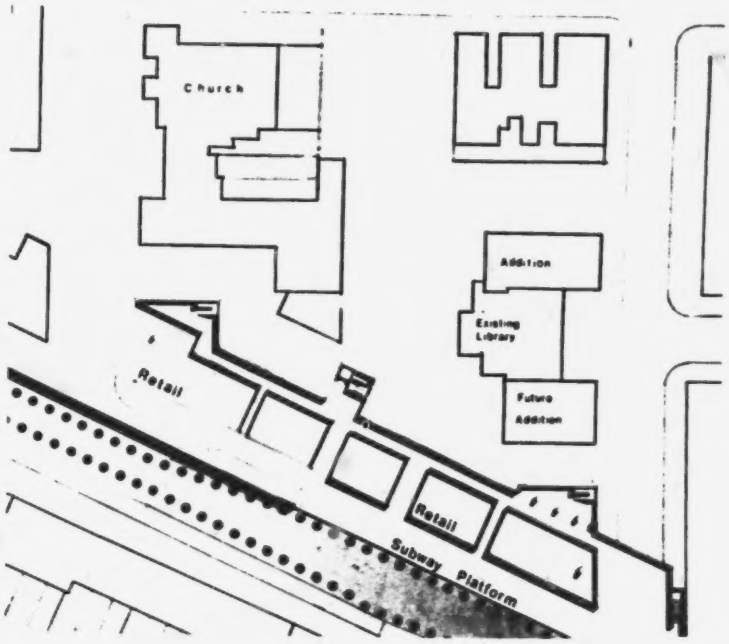
The hub of this particular section is a stretch of major retail street that includes at one end the point at which the major subway line connects with an elevated shuttle line. Further over and marking the opposite end of the college area is another subway line, thus providing the entire site with quick and easy access to the rest of Brooklyn and New York City. Crosstown bus lines run through the area, cutting across the subway lines, so that once again there is access to other parts of Brooklyn. These bus routes will also be the transportation system for the college itself.

Along this stretch of major retail street, there are clothing stores, a record shop, storefront churches, a grocery store, an old furniture store, and several store spaces that are at the moment empty and rundown. Above these stores are offices and business establishments and apartments. Most of these buildings are deteriorating. While the buildings themselves should be replaced, the shops and offices should clearly be retained.



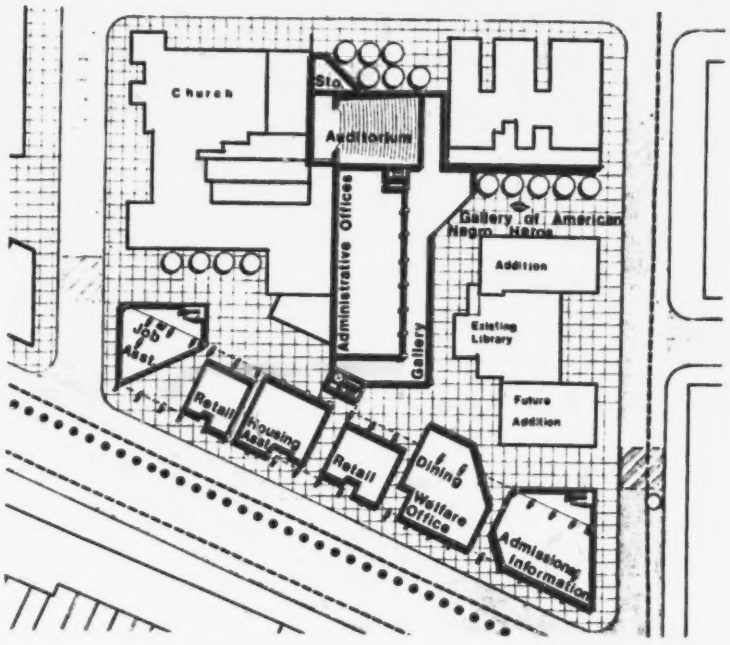
Transit Lines
Bus Lines
Transit and Railroad Station
Long Island Railroad


AVENUE
PLACE
STREET
MONROE STREET
MADISON STREET
PUTNAM AVENUE
JEFFERSON AVENUE
FULTON AVENUE
LEFFERTS PLACE
CLASSON AVENUE
FRANKLIN AVENUE
BEDFORD AVENUE
Roof level
Art
Bus Stop
Park
Soap Box
Retail stand
Bench
Shower pool
Telephone
Information
Subway Stop

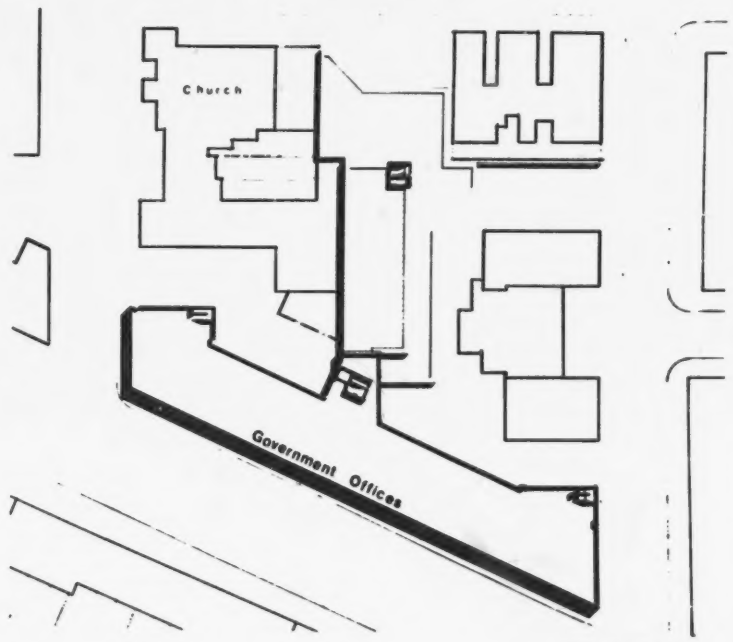


Lower level

GOVERNMENT: This sector of the plan is located in the area with the best transportation and community activity. Two subway lines connect it with the other parts of the city. The major retail street is a vital commercial artery, and the college's main entrances will be on this street, adjacent to offices and other functions. The open spaces in the rear will be tent areas (art, gallery of famous American Negroes, park, etc.). The existing branch library can be expanded to relate with the college. The college's galleries, auditoria, and surrounding open spaces will be open to the public nights and Sundays. Upper floors will house separate student, faculty, and community administrations sharing some central facilities to promote interchange of ideas.

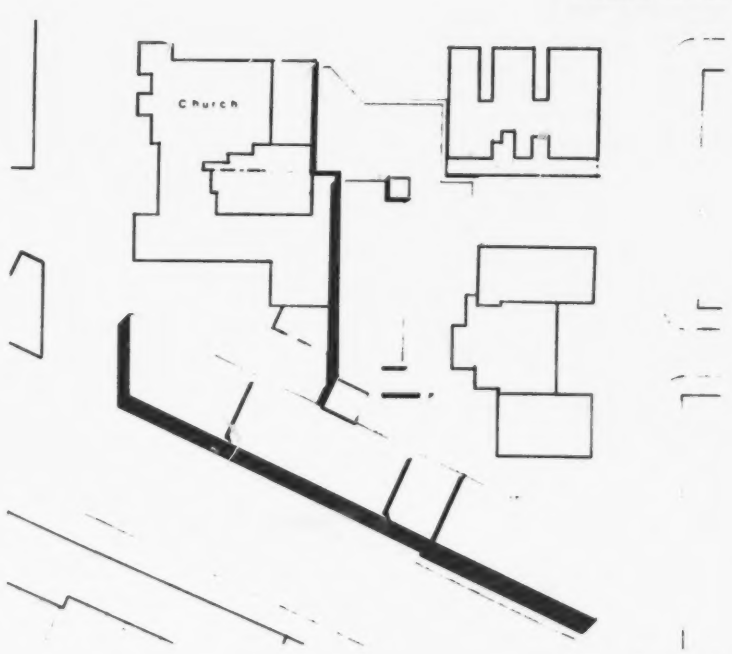


Ground level



Third level

Second level



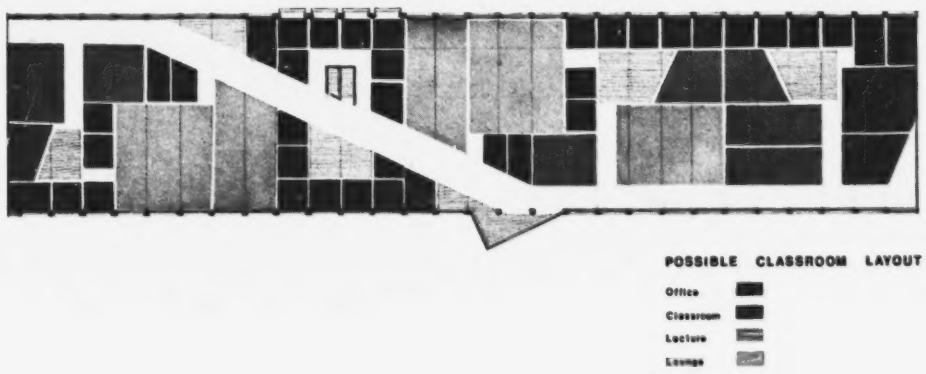
Roof level

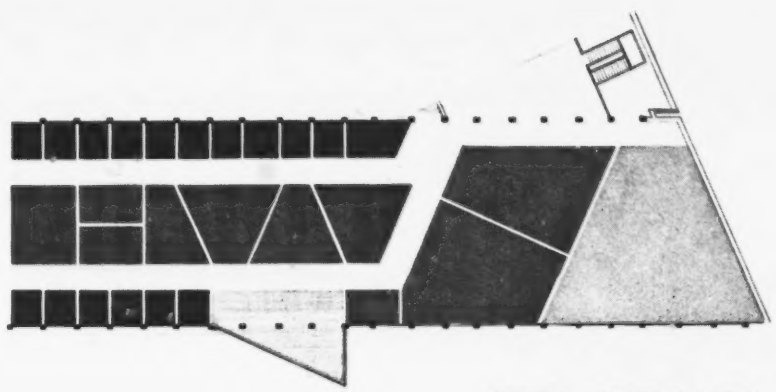
This section of major retail street could serve as the heart of the college. The college structures would follow and retain the basic busy, commercial flavor of the area. The street level of the buildings could rehouse existing commercial establishments and also add establishments that do not exist there now—perhaps a restaurant, stationery store, dry cleaning establishment, etc. Along this part of the street there could be street level offices for community services and information—housing, jobs, welfare opportunities—as well as entrances to the upper floors. All of these commercial establishments would be closely tied with the college. They would provide internships for some of the students studying business management (and many of the merchants might wish to enroll in the adult business management training programs). Students and the college might operate establishments such as restaurants cooperatively. Although a restaurant might be college-owned and student-operated, it could also be open to the public. These cooperative facilities would furnish jobs for students and revenue for the college, while providing the students with real experience.

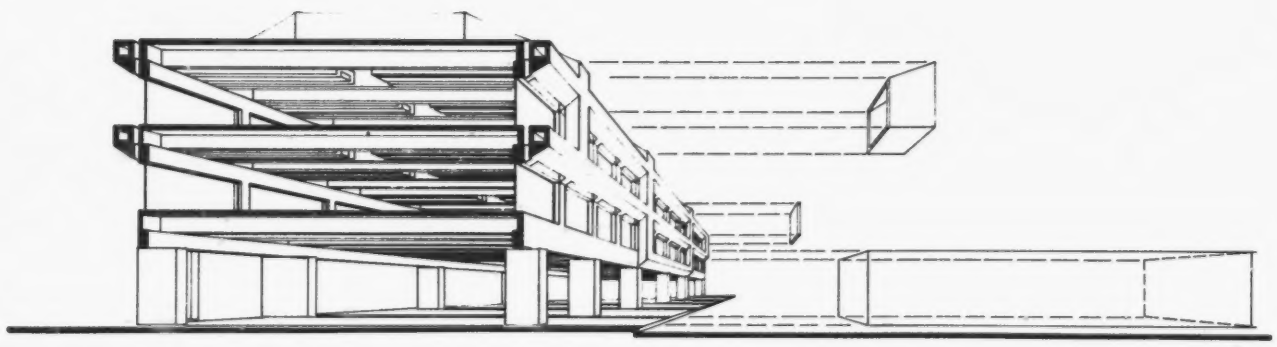
The upper floors of these buildings (limited to the three- to four-story height dictated by the scale of the area) could be jointly occupied by community businesses, college classrooms, office space for faculty, community organizations, private establishments, information centers, and academic facilities.

CLASSROOMS: The structure envisioned for classrooms allows flowing spaces free of major mechanical elements, which are attached to the exterior of the building like peripheral arteries. The interior spaces would be organized according to current needs. Variables such as room size, classroom ratios, offices, lecture halls, and corridor placement would be worked out at the time of occupancy and could be easily altered or changed. Stairs are designed as vertical piazzas—spaces for people-watching or gossip.

The base of this structure is a series of piers placed on a 20-foot module. Upper levels are formed with prefabricated Vierendeel truss walls which allow generous openings and support a precast floor system. This clear span floor system is based on a 10-foot module. Interior supply ducts, wiring, plumbing, and lighting are housed in prefabricated sections that are placed between beams. Walls and windows can be arranged as necessary by lighting prefab units into place.

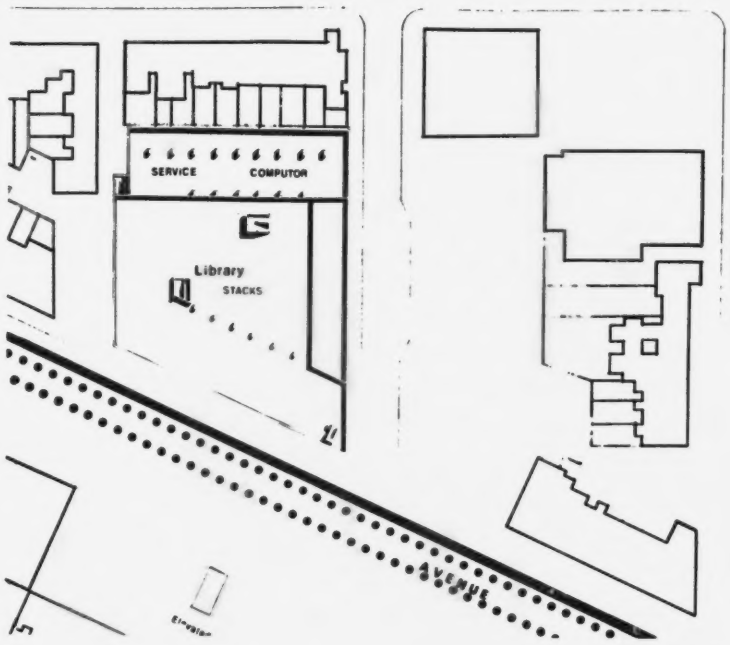






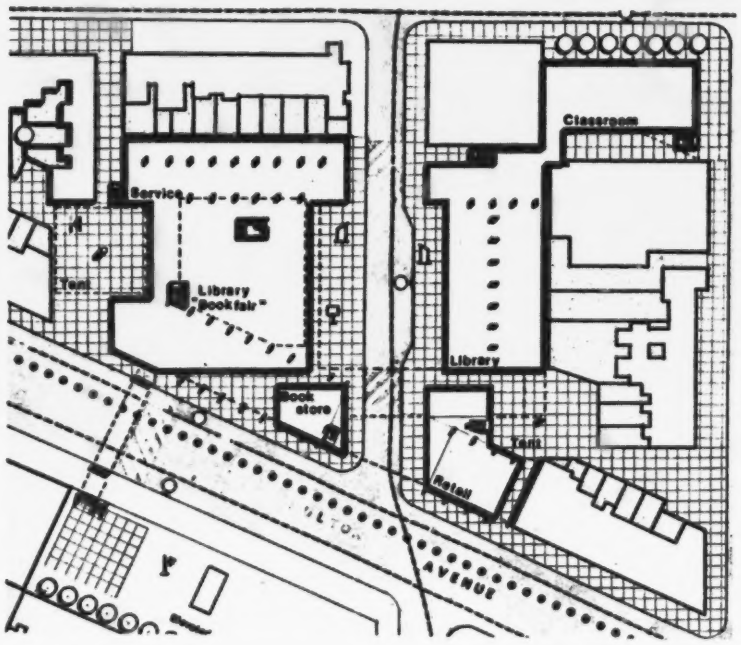
The new buildings must respect the surrounding area both in structure and design. The proposed 20-foot module, since it is based on the existing store and housing module, would form the basis of the structural system used for new construction. All utility pipes and ducts should be placed outside of the buildings, leaving the floor spaces completely open. Movable walls and visual dividers could then be placed wherever the inhabitants needed them. Spaces could be rearranged as required.

The open areas behind the new buildings would be public spaces, used by both college and community people. These could be "tent" areas—terraces, lounging spaces, open art galleries, small parks, with the possibility that they could be covered with a removable roof structure for "umbrella" protection in bad weather.

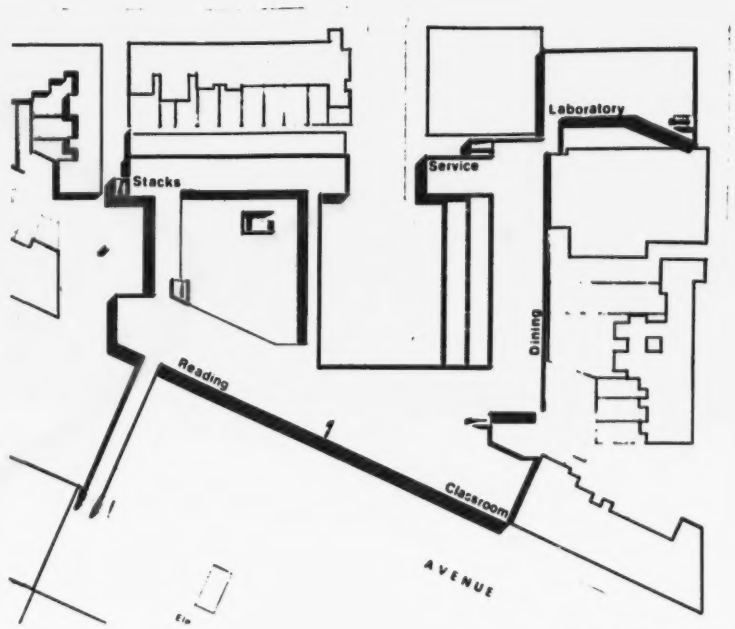


Lower level

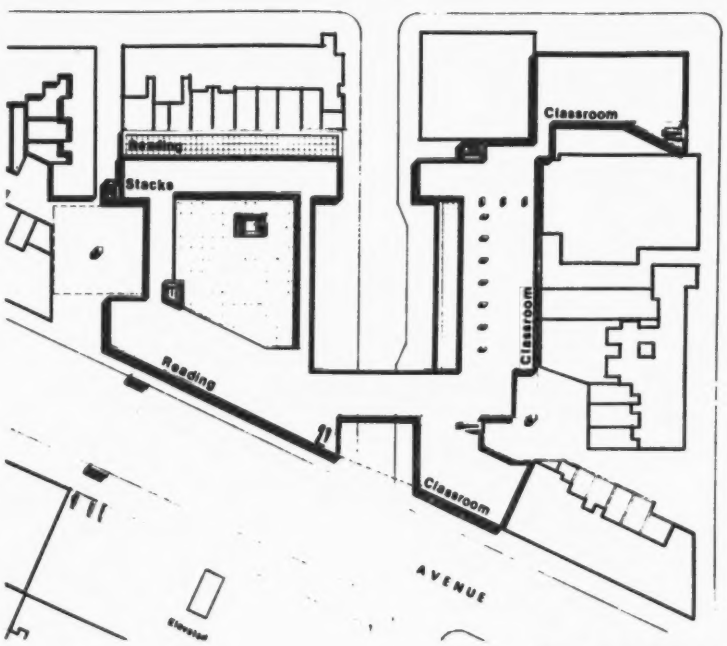
Information in the library must be both accessible and attractive to students and community. A library chiefly containing paperback volumes will give greater access to a larger number of people than a conventional library. The Bedford-Stuyvesant library will attempt to reveal the excitement of its content through its physical character and appearance. Sidewalks and streets become part of the library, with newsstands, book racks, and poster displays. The large, skylit main floor will suggest a fair as well as a storehouse demonstrating that a library can symbolize both action and knowledge.



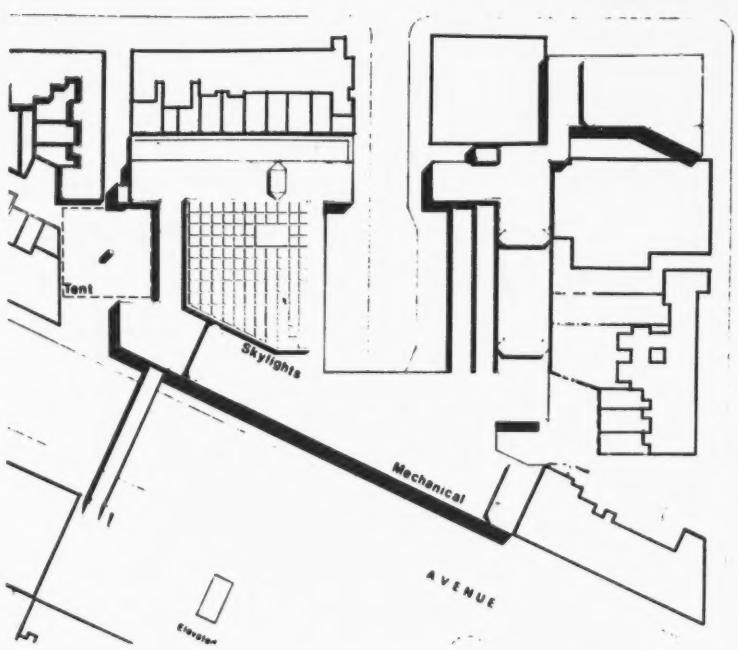
Ground level



Third level



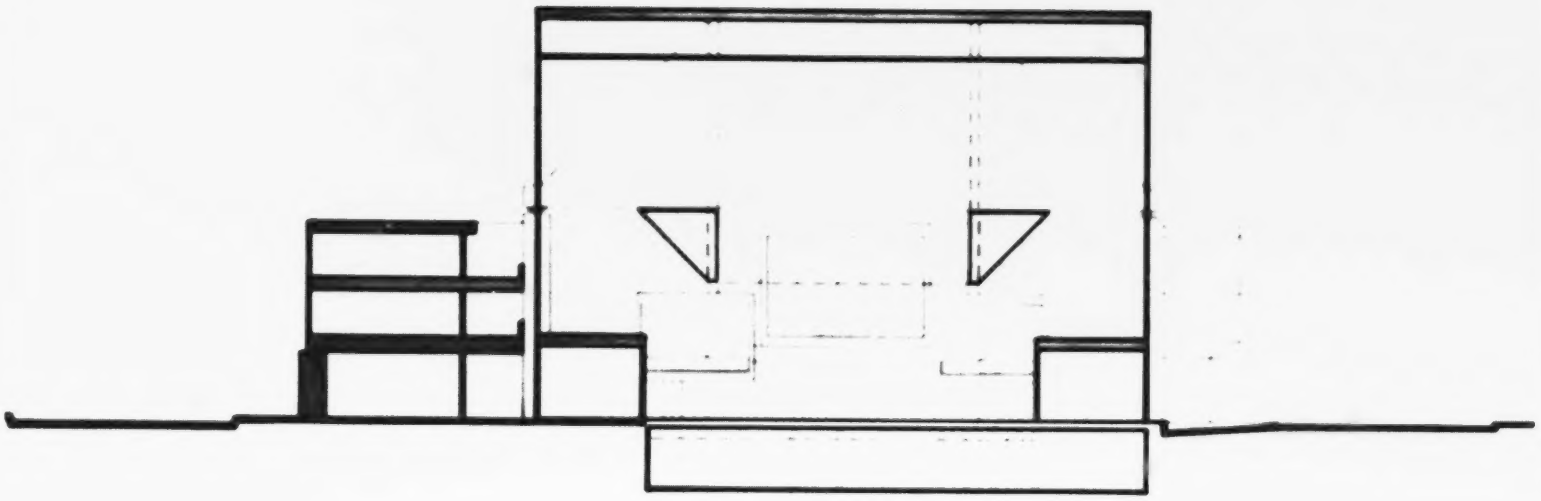
Second level

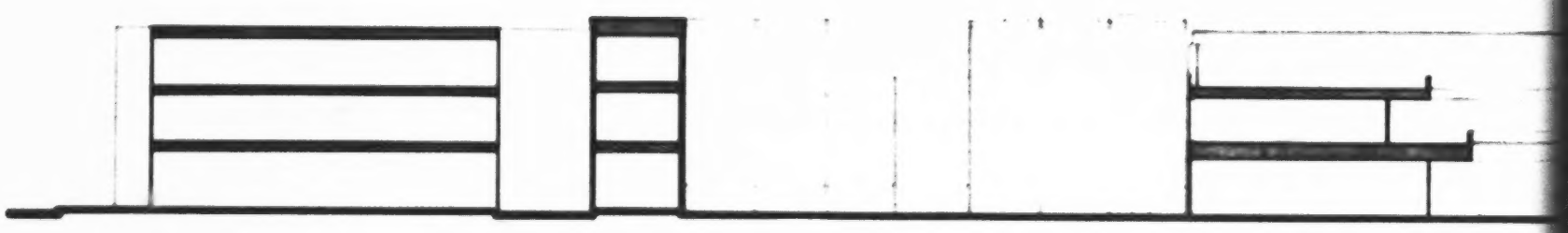


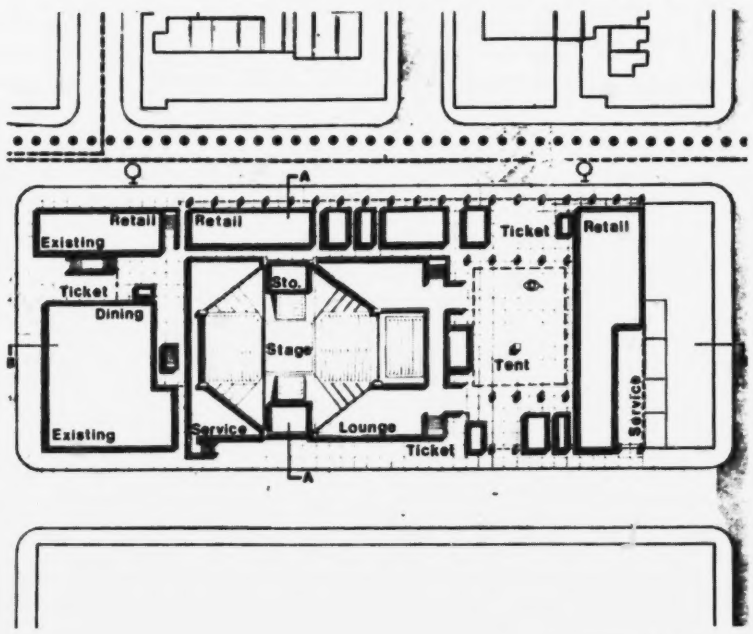
Roof level

The college's library cannot be simply a warehouse for books or the domain of scholars. Although small libraries might well be scattered throughout the area, even in housing and recreation spaces, the main library functions should be at the street level on the major retail street and closely tied in with the existing nearby public library. But this would not be what is generally thought of as a library, collegiate or any other kind. It would not resemble a storehouse but a store, a book fair, a place with free and open access. Although there would be some part of the library reserved from close contact with the public—the computer data bank, rare hardbound volumes, and expensive research materials—the basic purpose of the library would be to get as much reading material as possible into the hands of students and community people. Most of the volumes would be paperbacks, and as many of these as possible would be given away free or sold at cost. The main floor book fair section will be divided into two sections, one on each side of a major north-south avenue with a bridge over the avenue to connect them. The open areas at each end of the library will be covered by "tents" to form an outdoor extension of the library. Meeting rooms and lecture space could also be included for both college and community use.

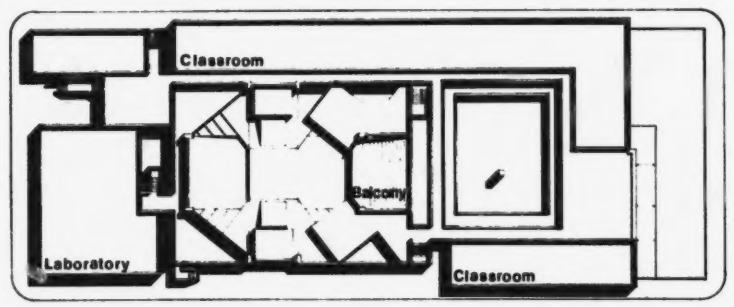
CULTURE: The cultural center will be located near a secondary subway line to increase its accessibility. It is designed to accommodate a variety of functions. It can be divided into several classroom theater spaces, or it can form a single, 1,500-seat theater. It can be arranged as a theater-in-the-round or divided into two conventional proscenium theaters. Balconies can be sectioned as lecture spaces or classrooms for instruction in theater arts or music. Additional classrooms and work spaces are arranged around the main structure to increase the use and activity of the area and provide auxiliary services such as set design and construction shops or rehearsal halls. The large, open court in front of the center can serve as a grand foyer or lobby during larger performances, a pedestrian passage with retail shops, an outdoor concert area, a tent-covered exhibition space, or a small park. Bedford-Stuyvesant needs local cultural facilities—its own theater company, its own musical performances, art galleries and studios, jazz combos, etc. It needs a place that can act as a center both for activities generated by the college and those arising spontaneously from the community. These cultural and entertainment activities would not be limited to the college's cultural center, but the center might be a place where things begin and from which they could expand outward into all other parts of the area.



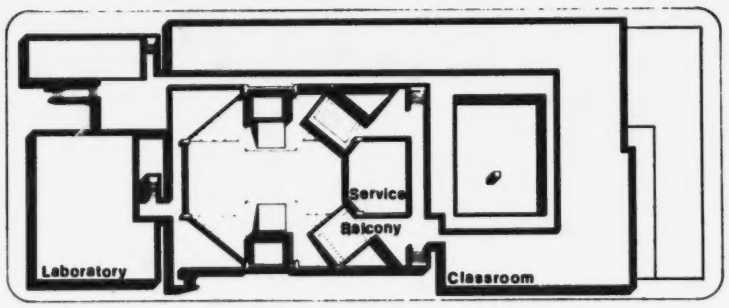




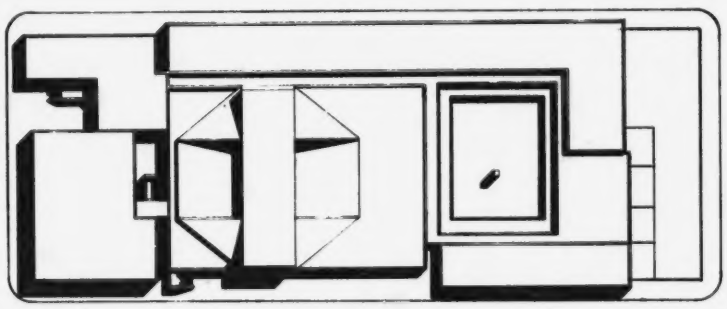
Ground level



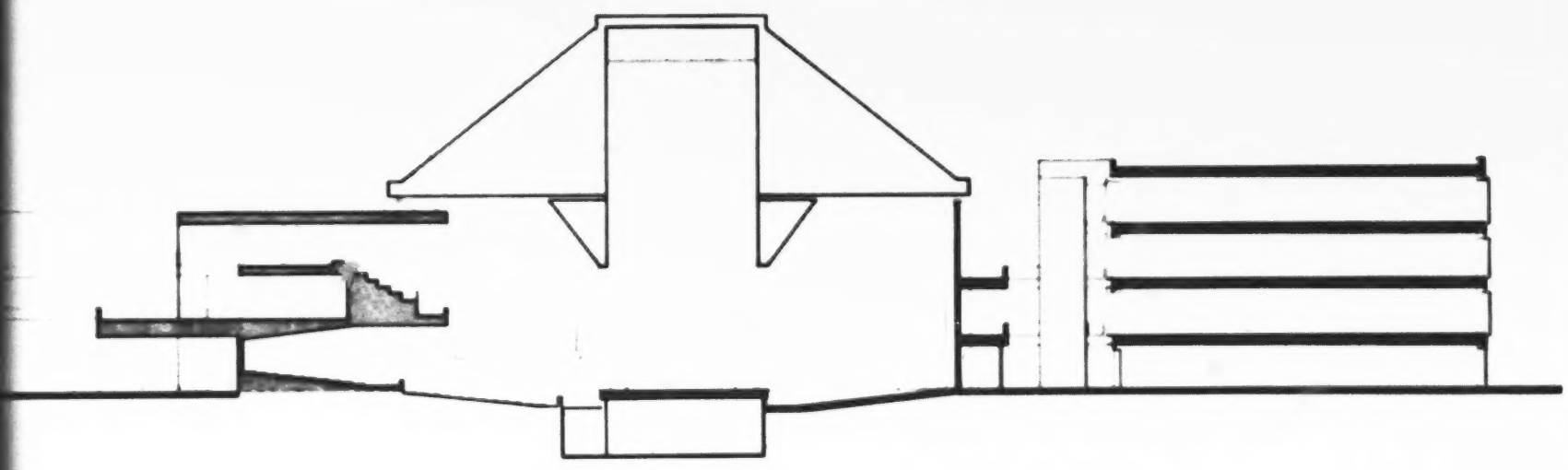
Third level

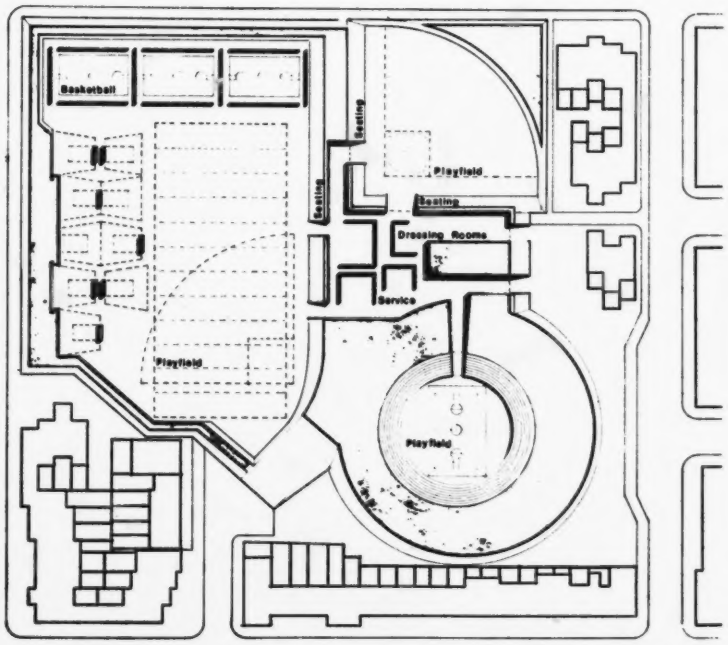


Second level



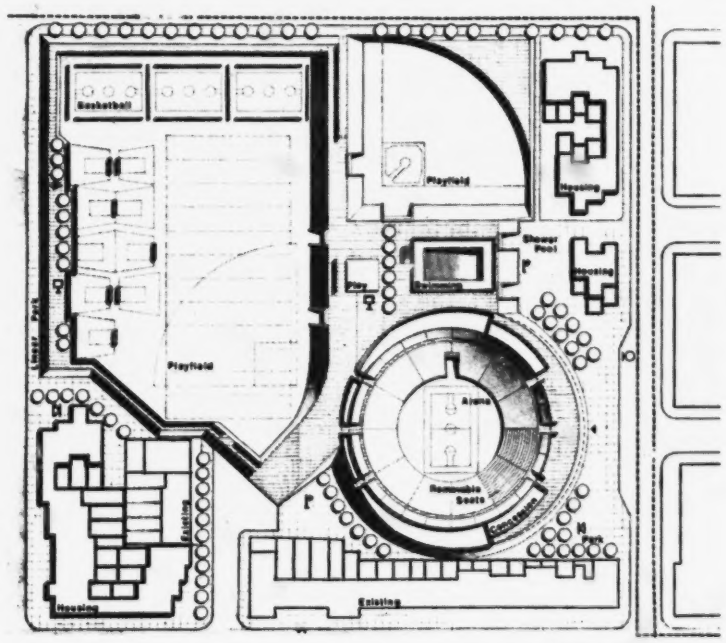
Roof level



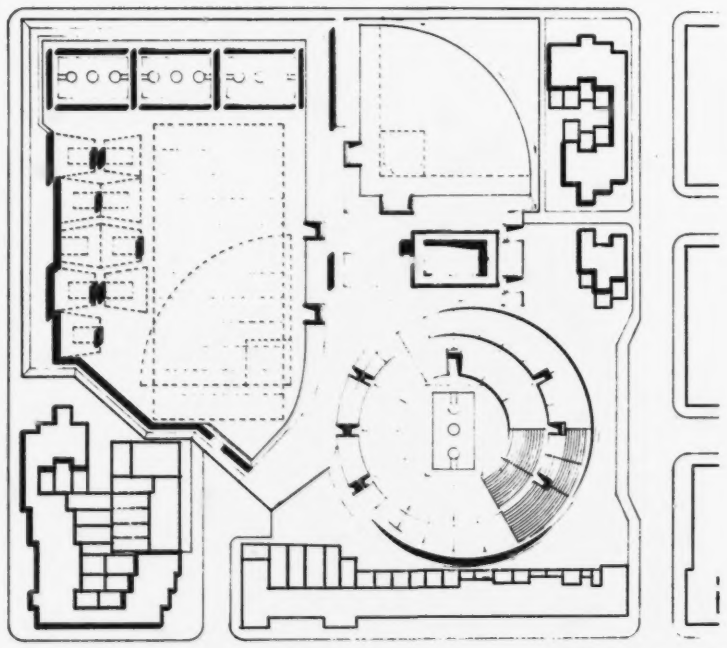


Lower level

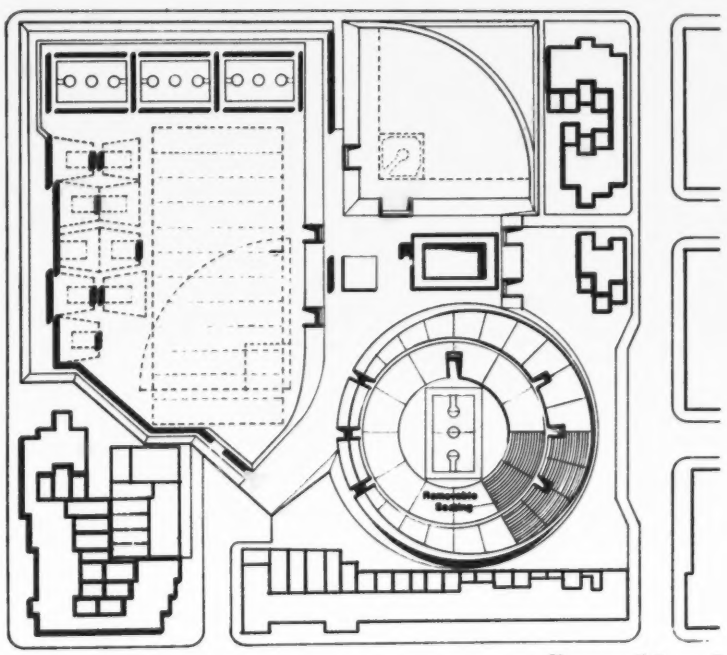
RECREATION: The college and community need a place to play, exercise, and walk.
Earth mounds around the playfields create play spaces for children, sound protection for the neighborhood from traffic, visual relief and barriers, seating areas for organized sports events, underground spaces for dressing rooms, service areas, and fallout shelters, and circulation control. Bubble structures will cover the arena, basketball courts, and swimming pool at different times of the year.



Ground level



Third level



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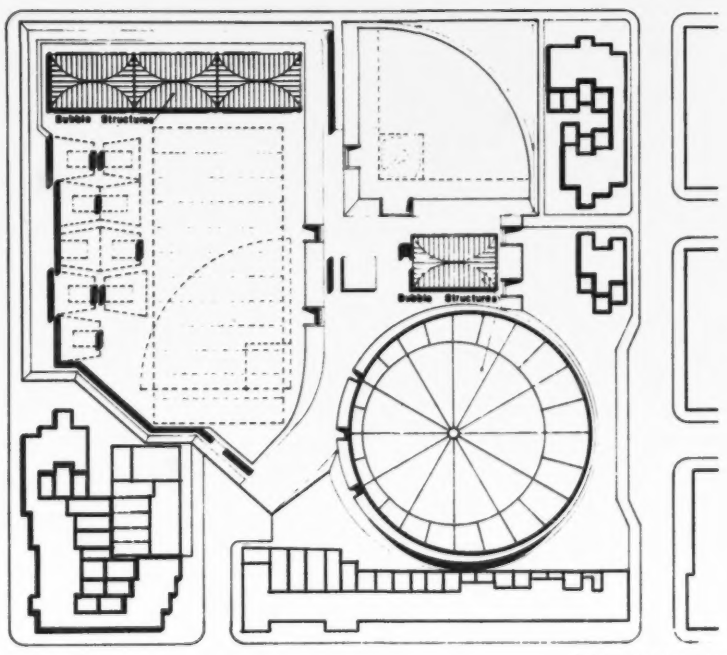


Roof level

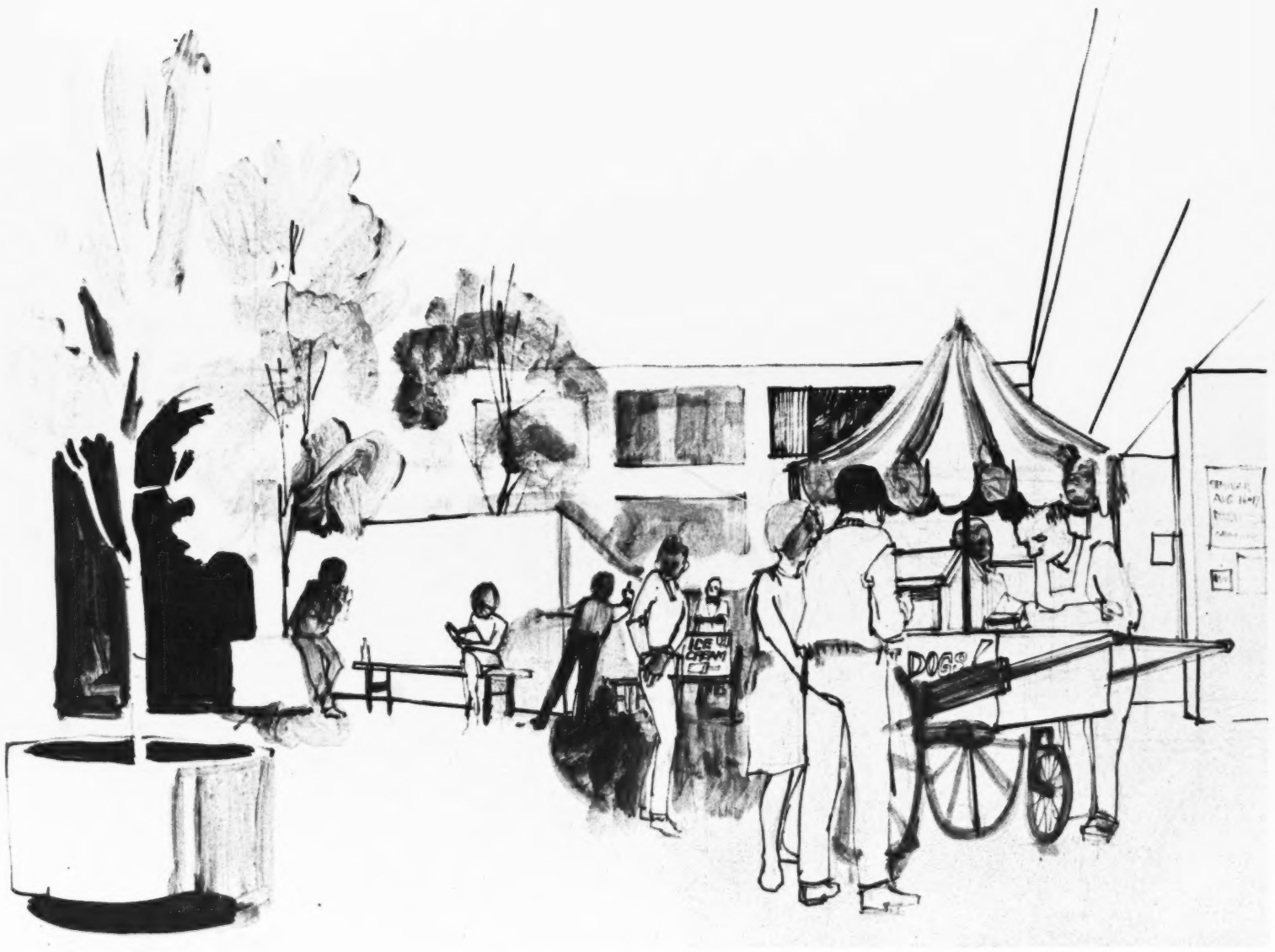
One of Bedford-Stuyvesant's most obvious needs is for more and better recreation space. Communities also need open space as a break in the landscape, but urban open space is always at a premium. Careful use of available space is needed in order to get maximum return from those areas put aside for recreational purposes.

The plan provides many ways of using the same space without interfering with or excluding other activities.

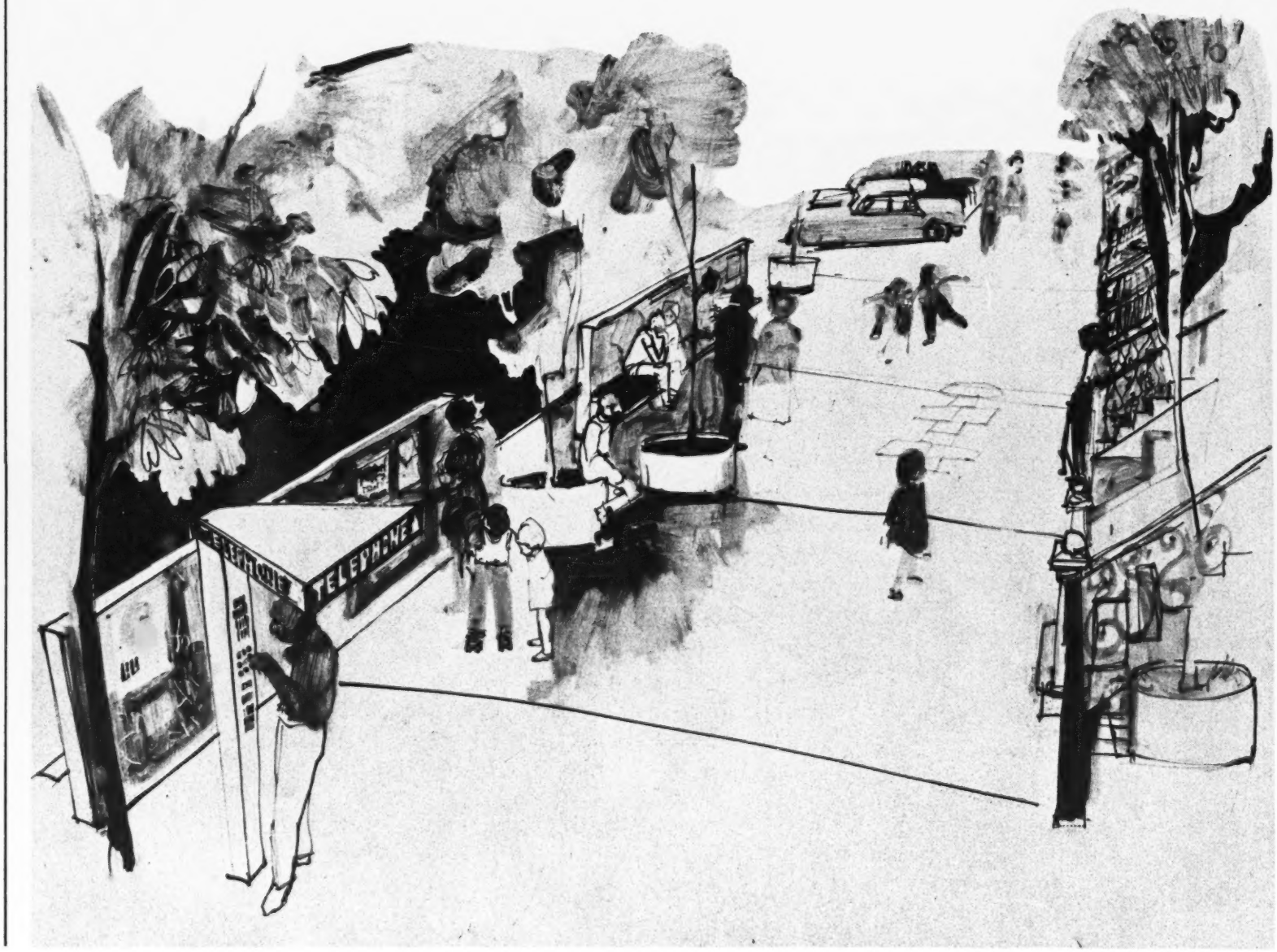
One way to make multiple, noninterfering use of open space is to create—artificially if necessary—different levels of use, in this case, by creating undulating mounds or small hills that are both useful in themselves for sliding, for bouncing things off of, or rolling down but which also can house things under them and serve also as dividers separating different kinds of activity.

The play or recreation area for this college is placed tentatively in an area not far from the cultural center. The heart of the recreation complex is a 4,000-seat, roughly circular, bowl-type arena sunk into the ground and surrounded by earth mounds. The seats are removable, so that the playing field and the mounds become additional play space when seating is not needed. With the seats in place, it can be used for games, concerts, lectures, or rallies. Canopied and heated, it can be used in all kinds of weather. Dressing rooms and maintenance areas are located under the earth mounds.

The area also contains a large swimming pool which may be covered with an air-supported structure and heated for use in cold weather. Several fountain-type or "shower" pools are included for children to swim and play in. There are also sculptural concrete slabs for handball, graffiti, and small games.



LINEAR PARKS: Streets are Bedford-Stuyvesant's open spaces for people's movements and transportation. Visually they rise and fall, gently reflecting the terrain, angling here and there to set different grid directions. They have a cool north side, a summer choice. Many streets are wider than need be—an opportunity to examine an alternative to the backyard park—a sort of linear park connecting the college facilities. These sidewalk parks offer the community its own choice for landscaping on a joint-occupancy basis. This leaves backyards, the last vestiges of private open space left in Bedford-Stuyvesant, to be developed individually. Unfortunately, these settings can only be seen from the air and are not always visible assets to the community. They should be preserved as part of the heritage of a community such as Bedford-Stuyvesant.



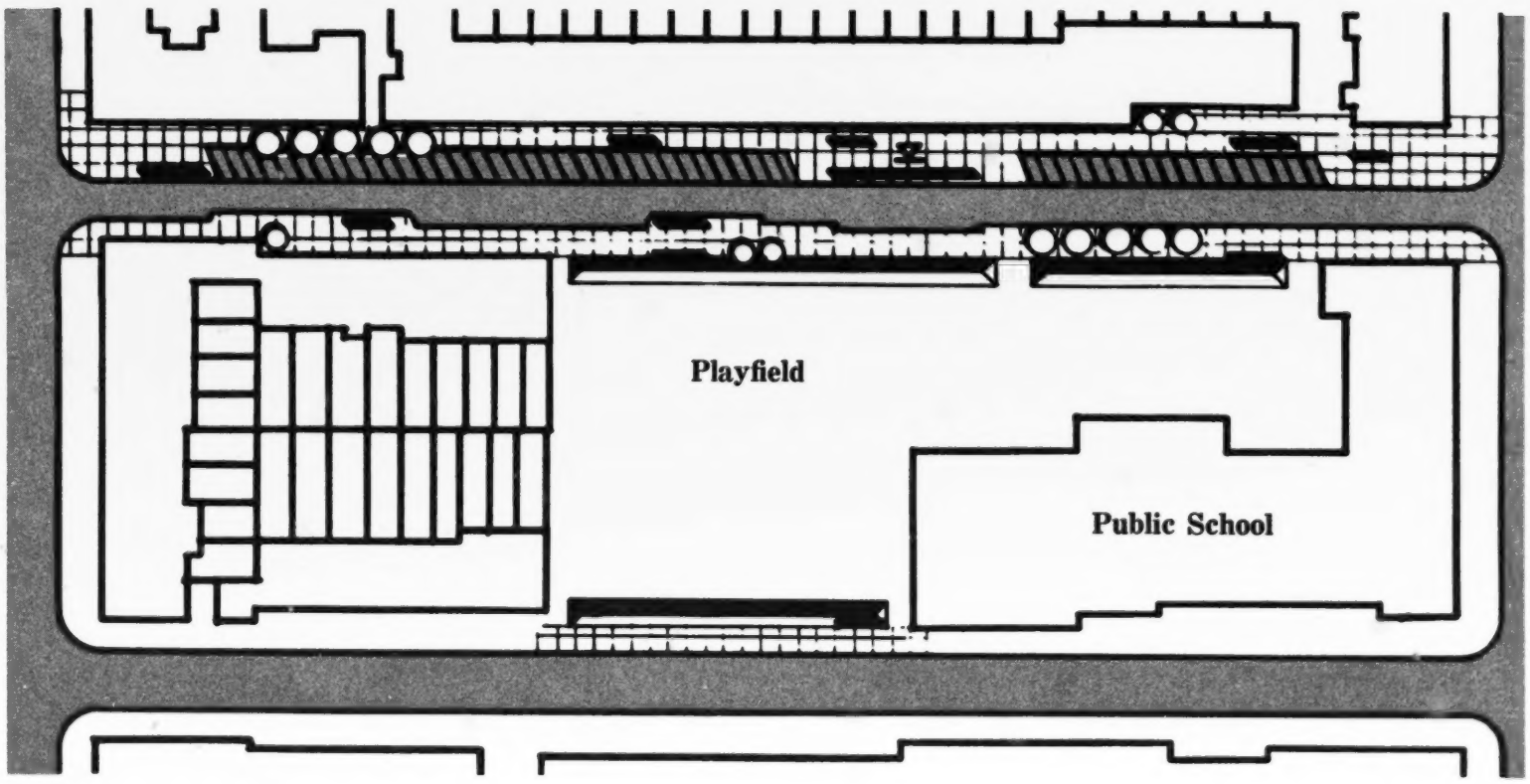
Perhaps the urban spaces in Bedford-Stuyvesant that have the most exciting potential are the streets themselves—the community's open spaces. Even now the streets are places where children play, people congregate and meet, especially on the sidewalks and front stoops. But for the most part, these open spaces are given over to traffic and parked cars. The streets are filled with signs saying "Don't" do this or that. In Bedford-Stuyvesant the streets are extraordinarily broad compared to suburban streets and can be used in many ways.

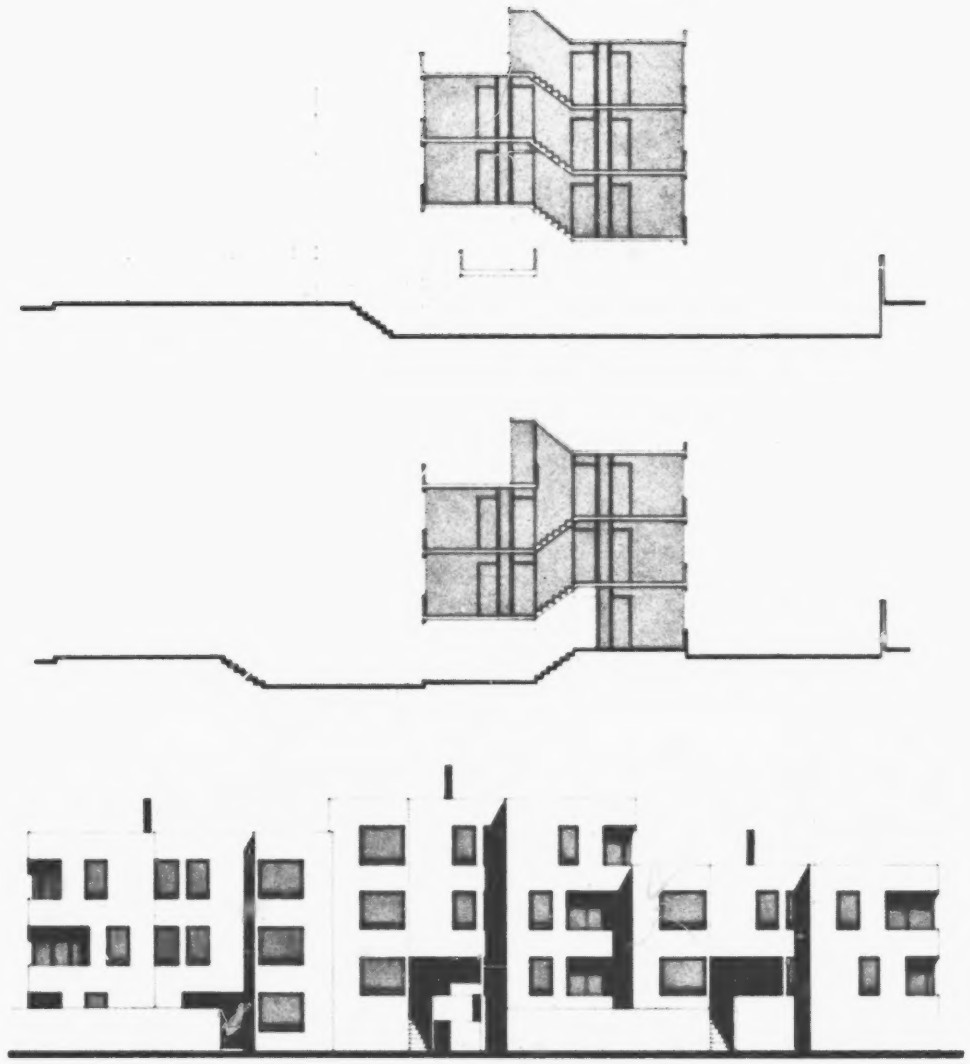
One possibility is to think of creating "linear parks" along many of the streets and perhaps some of the broad thoroughfares of Bedford-Stuyvesant. A linear park is essentially a different way of using the available sidewalk and street space. Instead of parking cars bumper to bumper along both sides of the street, cars can be limited to one side of the street but parked at an angle of 70 degrees. This would accommodate most of the cars presently parked in the bumper to bumper fashion.

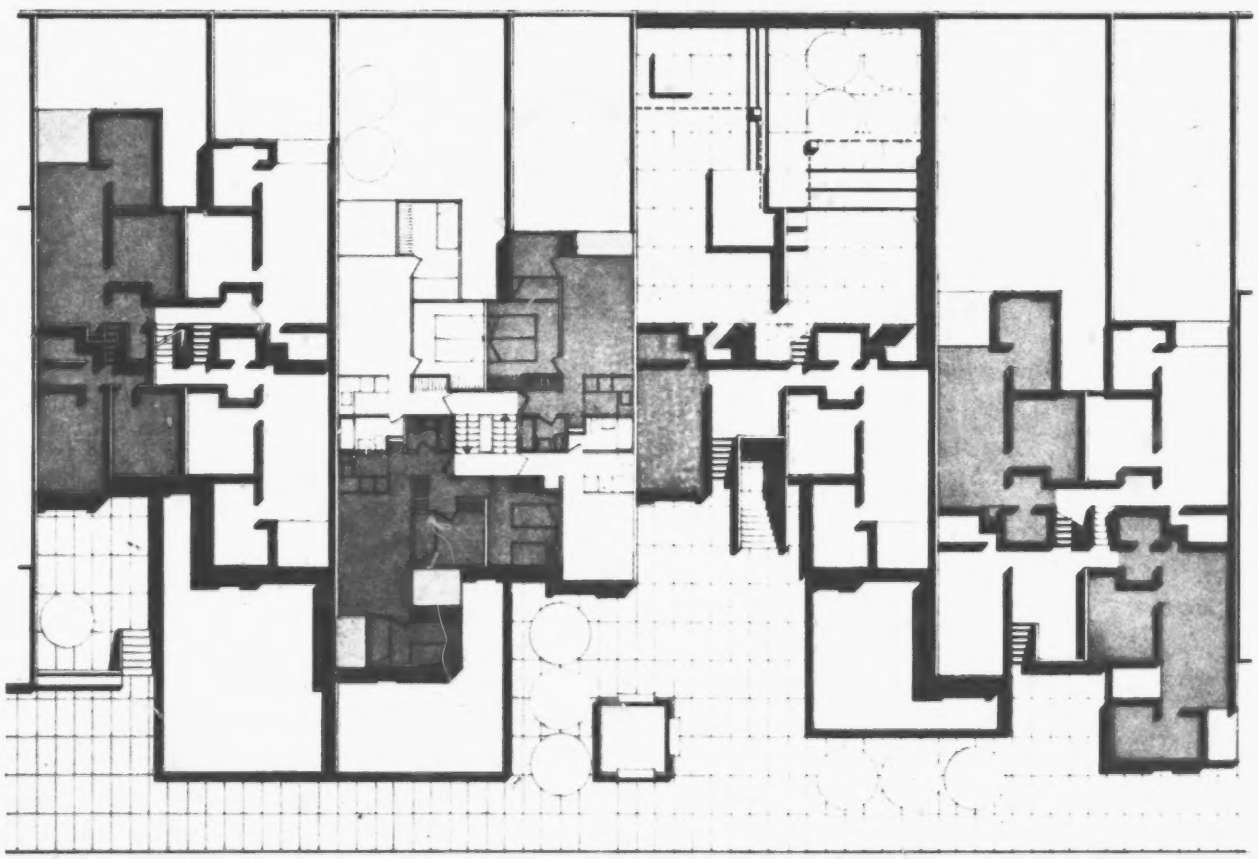
The space on the opposite side of the street is thus freed. The sidewalk area on the side of the street where no parking is allowed can then be expanded out into the street itself up to 10 feet. This area is then screened off from the traffic part of the street by segmented concrete slabs set upright on the ground, thus creating a linear private area that could run the length of the street. This kind of park area could then be used for many purposes. Tables and chairs, perhaps with umbrellas, scattered along the space could produce a kind of Parisian sidewalk cafe where people could congregate, drink coffee, and chat.

Small concessions — newspapers, coffee, hot dogs, magazines, tobacco, popcorn, ice cream— could be dotted along the park. Shade trees, selected by homeowners, could be planted on both sides of the sidewalk. The segmented slabs could be used for art work, posters, community information, and advertising and graffiti. Each park would be under the control of the people living along that particular street. Thus individual parks could have different arrangements, depending upon the people's desire.

Each park should contain public telephones—but not the ordinary glass box that can be destroyed by vandalism. A much better solution would be a metal post, covered by a protective hood to guard against weather. Built into the metal post would be a push-button dialing system with speaking and listening outlets similar to an intercom system (thus eliminating the removable hand phone), a set of instructions engraved into the metal post, and a slot for coins.







HOUSING: Living densities in Bedford-Stuyvesant are high, concentrating people in low-rise housing that dates from the late 1800's. The fact that these densities are high does not mean that they are undesirable. The question of desirability concerns the use of available space, not density. Thus the new housing provided by this proposal retains, and in some cases increases, the existing densities of the area by providing more efficient uses of space. New housing will fit into the 20-foot module that is characteristic of housing in Bedford-Stuyvesant. Instead of a space-consuming stairway for each unit, common stairs serving up to 12 units are employed. The new houses will have a variety of private yards and communal spaces permitting more comfortable surroundings. The new housing units can be introduced into available spaces.

One of the things that Bedford-Stuyvesant most desperately needs is additional housing. Even if all of the better homes are restored, there will still not be sufficient low-cost housing to go around. And since the college will be using some of the available sites in the area (even if they are occupied now by abandoned or inadequate buildings or vacant lots), housing must be a prime concern for the college. An additional factor that the college and community planners must consider is that the presence of the college itself will attract into the area many new people—faculty, students, possibly even additional adults who will work in or about the college. In fact, if the college succeeds in doing what it sets out to do, it should be a major generator of an economic boom for Bedford-Stuyvesant. New businesses, new manufacturing concerns, new public facilities should be coming in and will need space.

This will present planners with a real problem, for existing housing should be removed only in extreme circumstances and should be promptly replaced. There is, however, a considerable amount of space available in the empty lots and abandoned buildings. The need for housing that meets the density requirements

of Bedford-Stuyvesant and still has greater amenity has been studied and one possible solution projected.

The kind of challenge represented by housing is exactly what this new kind of college and this new kind of planning process is all about. It is one of the main reasons why this plan so far has stressed the necessity for flexibility in the distribution of college facilities, the maintenance of the urban mix and joint occupancies, and the establishment of close links with every segment of the community. An academic ghetto would obviously contribute nothing to the solution of these problems. But a college that works with the community, that occupies only one or two floors of a building, a college that can move out of a building if it is suddenly needed for other purposes and move into a new combination with other functions, can solve problems and meet challenges that conventional college planning is incapable of dealing with.

This kind of planning — including the creation of the unique academic institution outlined briefly here—is not going to be simple. It faces problems that conventional planning would not have. There is the matter of the acceptance of a different kind of curriculum and a new kind of faculty. The college needs to be accredited and accepted by the larger academic world. The academic people and the community people must work together to create the college and enable the planning process to work. The kind of facilities described here, such as low-cost, high-density housing, must be made to pay economically. Money must be raised to create this college and to restore Bedford-Stuyvesant. Solutions to these problems will come—when they come—out of the continued work of the residents in Bedford-Stuyvesant and all people interested in making America's Bedford-Stuyvesants better places for people to live.

NO

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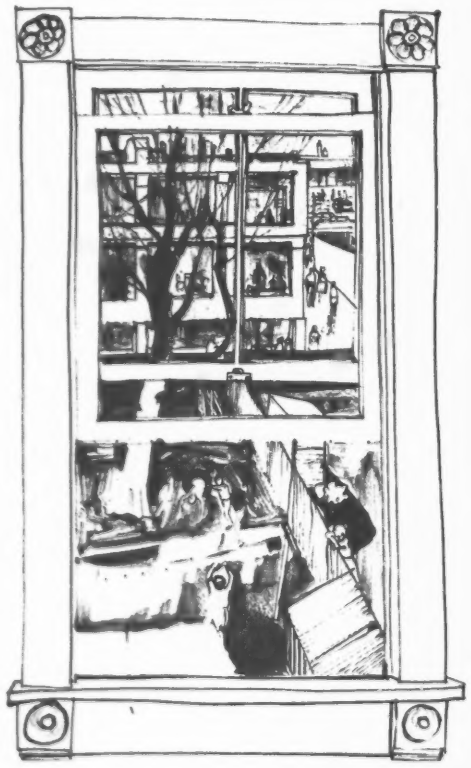

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